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Classical Association Conference 2026

Friday 10 April - Sunday 12 April 2026

Manchester Metropolitan University

The University of Manchester

Abstracts

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FRIDAY 10 APRIL 2026 -SESSION 1: 10.00-12.00

PANEL 01: Diplomacy 1: Imperialism and Diplomacy in the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean. Chair: Tim Cornell; venue: #tbc

Ivan Ramos Arcos (Universitat de les Illes Balears): *Gifts, Rituals, and the Politics of Encounter: Diplomatic Exchanges between Ptolemaic Egypt and Republican Rome (273–30 BCE)*

This paper explores the role of ritualized exchanges and material gifts in the diplomatic encounters between Ptolemaic Egypt and the Roman Republic, from the first formal contact in 273 BCE to the annexation of Egypt in 30 BCE. Rather than serving as tokens of goodwill, such gifts and acts of hospitality were central instruments of negotiation, symbolic communication, and political influence. They provided a framework for encounters between two powers whose cultural codes diverged, yet who shared an interest in legitimizing authority through ceremonial interaction.

Drawing on a wide range of sources—literary narratives (such as Polybius or Livy) alongside epigraphic and papyrological evidence—the paper examines how rituals of reception, banquets, and the circulation of valuable objects functioned as political performances. Special attention is given to the staging of embassies in Rome, the manipulation of ritual space in Alexandria, and the strategic deployment of gifts ranging from precious metals and artworks to exotic animals. These practices reveal not only the Ptolemaic monarchy's efforts to sustain prestige and autonomy, but also the Roman Senate's capacity to reshape diplomatic protocol in ways that underscored Rome's emerging hegemony.

The analysis argues that the ritual and material dimensions of diplomacy were not peripheral but constitutive: they structured how Egypt and Rome conceptualized their relationship, mediated conflict, and articulated symbolic hierarchies. More broadly, this case study highlights the performative and material foundations of international politics in the ancient Mediterranean, showing how ceremonial practice and material culture mediated the encounter between Egypt, Rome, and the wider Mediterranean world.

Miguel Sanchez Morquecho (University of California, San Diego), *Diplomatic Culture in the Ancient Mediterranean and the Coming of Rome*

In this paper, I focus on the interactions of communities in the ancient Mediterranean during 230-168 B.C. to examine the customs comprising a diplomatic culture common to the region. More specifically, I employ the methodology of New Diplomatic History (NDH) to analyze the careers of diplomatic messengers active between communities from the Greek Peninsula and the expanding Roman Republic. I argue that diplomatic agents and their home and host communities adhered to various shared customs to facilitate diplomatic interaction and the transmission of messages.

Following the approach of NDH, I focus on the processes, rather than the results, of diplomatic activity. I first analyze the types of individuals communities selected as messengers. I show that despite prioritizing the status of agents, the Roman Republic oftentimes aligned itself with the customs of other communities in selecting messengers based on prior familiarity with the host state. This practice

allowed the agents to exploit their political and personal connections and further facilitated diplomatic interaction by encouraging respect and trust between the parties. I then discuss the process of traveling as a messenger, particularly the nonverbal devices through which agents communicated their status to foreigners. Messengers from Rome and the poleis and kingdoms of the Greek Peninsula employed staffs, seals, and other objects to express their status. The common use and acceptance of these devices by diverse communities procured the safety of the agents and the preservation of diplomatic contact. Last, I discuss how hosting states, despite their different forms of government, utilized their topographical and architectural features and protocols to convey nonverbal messages to foreign agents.

My analysis of the processes messengers and their communities followed in their diplomatic travels and interactions evidences the existence of a trans-Mediterranean diplomatic culture.

Jorge Barbero Barroso (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid): *Covert Activities in the Diplomatic Interactions of the Roman Republic (3rd – 1st BC)*

This paper investigates the role of covert activities during the period of Roman Republican expansion, spanning from the 3rd to the 1st century BC. While classical scholarship has traditionally focused on formal and visible aspects of ancient diplomacy—such as treaties, senatorial missions, embassies, and declared negotiations— this study shifts attention to the less documented, more elusive practices that occurred behind the scenes and beyond the official record. Covert activities refers here to a wide range of non-conventional diplomatic actions: clandestine negotiations, unofficial political interlocutions, covert espionage operations, diplomatic bribery, hidden agendas, and the strategic use of misinformation and manipulation. These practices often blurred the boundaries between war and peace, and between political representation and individual agency. Far from being exceptional, they were embedded in the mechanisms of power and influence that governed inter-polity relations in the ancient Mediterranean. Drawing on an interdisciplinary methodological approach—combining ancient history, and theoretical approaches from different fields such as International Relations, Sociology or Intelligence Studies—this research examines how Roman and non-Roman actors used informal and subreptitious diplomatic channels to pursue their goals. Through case studies from a range of literary sources, the paper analyses the significance of these hidden interactions and the way they were represented, concealed, or morally judged by ancient authors. Special attention is paid to the epistemological and methodological difficulties posed by our sources, which are overwhelmingly biased towards official narratives and moralizing frameworks. Despite these challenges, this study argues that covert activities were not merely an incidental feature, but an important component of Mediterranean politics. Its analysis allows for a richer understanding of diplomatic dynamics and the cultural logic of secrecy in antiquity.

PANEL 02: Africa 1: Egypt. Chair: Phil Booth (MMU); venue: #tbc

Özge Şenses (Trinity College, Dublin): *Egyptian Cults in Roman Asia*

The presence of Egyptian cults in Roman provincial contexts offers a perspective on how belief systems were integrated into local societies and shaped within imperial structures. Often described as the spread of an eastern religion into the Greco-Roman world, the worship of Egyptian deities also reflects processes of adaptation. In provincial settings, these traditions became embedded in everyday life and civic institutions, illustrating interactions between local practices and Roman imperial

frameworks. Drawing upon case studies from Provincia Asia, this paper examines the role of Egyptian cults in Roman provincial settings. It considers how these cults operated at multiple levels of society, in domestic environments as well as in public spheres. Using textual sources alongside material remains, it brings together different types of evidence to explore how these traditions were practiced and maintained over time. By situating this material within its local and regional contexts, it underlines the presence of Egyptian cults in provincial communities and reflects on how they were positioned within the wider Roman imperial setting. This paper contributes to discussions of provincial religious life by examining how Egyptian cults took shape within Roman provincial society through the interaction of imperial structures and local contexts. In doing so, it highlights religion as a significant part of cultural interaction within Greco-Roman society and presents these cults as participants in broader processes of cultural exchange and transformation rather than as eastern additions.

Lisa Doyle (Trinity College, Dublin): *Egypt and Origin Stories in the Scholia to Apollonius' Argonautica*

This paper will explore traditions about Egypt in classical antiquity, specifically in the context of the literature and scholarship of the Hellenistic period. I focus the first part of my discussion on a neglected source: the scholia (commentary notes) on Apollonius of Rhodes' epic poem, the *Argonautica*. Although the scholia are preserved in Medieval manuscripts, they derive from Hellenistic and Imperial commentaries and are a window into the ancient intellectual tradition. The scholia to Book 4 of Apollonius' poem contain an extensive excursus on Egyptian lore which elucidates the origins of knowledge and life in Egypt, the travels and conquests of Sesonchosis (a mythical king), and the experiment of Psammetichus (Σ Arg. 4.257-62c - 4.277-8). Apollonius' commentators reference a range of fragmentary authors on topics including the antiquity of Egypt and its people. I examine how the mytho-historical world of the *Argonautica*, which was composed in the learned environment at the Library of Alexandria, prompts such a discussion in the scholia. By contextualising it against the wider Greek discourse on Egypt, I note connections with authors such as Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus. As Rutherford (2016) articulates, 'encounters with other cultural traditions was a central part of lived experience' for the Greeks. Therefore, in the second part of my discussion, I consider the place held by Egypt in the ancient imagination. I draw on more examples from the Argonautica scholia which preserve the local histories and origin stories crafted by Greek poets, mythographers and commentators to establish how the discourse on Egypt relates to the Greek preoccupation with origins (*aitia*) and foundation stories (*ktiseis*).

Isabel Hood (Independent Scholar): *Non-divine transformations: Erechtheus*

In 1901/2 Pierre Jouguet excavated the cemetery at Ghoran in the Egyptian Fayoum. From Ghoran he brought back decorated mummy cartonnage dated to the 3rd century BC. Post-excavation, some of the cartonnages were subject to new scientific procedures (papyri of this period were commonly reused within cartonnage) to separate out pieces of papyri in pursuit of new Greek texts. This destroyed the Egyptian funerary cartonnage as components of the burial assembly.

The Ghoran cartonnage was found to contain texts in Demotic (cursive Egyptian) and in Greek. In 1962, now in the Sorbonne, cartonnage from Ghoran, mummy 24 was found to contain papyri fragments in Greek of lost works of Menander and Euripides, an important discovery for Classics. Now known as P. Sorb.

2328, Euripides' Erechtheus was first published in1967 by Colin Austin. It contains a large portion of Euripides' lost play Erechtheus. This tale of the earthborn early King of Athens, who sacrificed all, and died defending Athens in time of war, is absolutely central to the mythology of Athens, and may seem as Classical a subject as it gets.

However, examination of such texts as literary works obscures their equal place as material culture, within an archaeological and cultural context within Egypt. Even Erechtheus himself isn't always entirely Athenian. He has also been argued to be pre-Greek, and, indeed, considered Egyptian.

P. Sorb. 2328 has been subject to multiple violent changes of state, outwardly transforming the object each time. Which discipline, and which types of objects are valued, why, and by who, has been as germane to the history of P. Sorb. 2328 as categorisation by (changing) appearance. This paper examines the transformations of the papyrus and Erechtheus

Jerry Ho (Liverpool): *Prostrating to Min: A Quarrying Expedition to Wadi Hammamat during the Reign of Amenemhat* (Lightning Talk)

Decorum, as an institution governing the social behaviours of elites, including the king, indicates what was permissible and what was forbidden. It set the boundaries of action within religious life and reinforced the hierarchical nature of society (Baines 1985: 277).

During a quarrying expedition to Wadi Hammamat during the reign of Amenmhat I, Intef and his expedition had been unable to find out the location of Wadi Hammamat after searching for eight days, so Intef put himself on his belly to Min (di.n Hr Xt r mnw) to seek the help of god (Goedicke 1964: 44). During the 12th Dynasty, people were not depicted before deities directly (Baines 2023: 81). Yet in expeditionary contexts, prostration appears as a gesture towards a higher being. It suggests that prostration, as an action of decorum, was practised in different ways outside Egypt. Such alternative expressions of respect to deities are closely connected to Egyptian cosmology, in which the desert was viewed as a realm of disorder and chaos. By appealing to the gods directly, they sought divine assistance, which in turn strengthened their confidence in overcoming the adversities encountered.

In short, this light talk would like to bring into a conversation how ancient Egyptians expressed respect to deities during the early 12th Dynasty as demonstrated in expeditionary contexts. It considers how non-royal elites practised decorum towards deities in a remote desert area outside Egypt, performing decorum in ways suited to remote landscapes beyond the Nile Valley. This light talk primarily covers examples in inscription from the 12th Dynasty.

PANEL 03: Groups and Group Identity in Post-Sullan Rome. Chairs: Filippo Carlà-Uhink (Universität Potsdam) and Catherine Steel (Glasgow); venue #tbc

The period of little more than a decade between the outbreak of the Social War and the end of Sulla's dictatorship involved a radical transformation in Roman society: tens of thousands died in a series of brutal civil wars, Roman citizenship was extended to the free inhabitants of Italy, there were major transferrals of wealth among the elite as a result of the proscriptions, and the institutions of Roman government were reshaped by Sulla in a programme of 'restoring the Republic'. The consequences of these changes underpinned the instability of the final decades of the Republic.

This panel aims to explore these issues through a consideration of the new political and economic formations which emerged in the post-Sullan period, and how these groups established themselves in relation to the sources of power which had survived this period of upheaval. Recent studies, including Mouritsen 2023 and Danon 2025, have demonstrated the existence of great wealth and social and economic power outside the ruling political elite. Our papers are united by an interest in the mechanisms by which those outside the pre-Sullan senatorial elite created and deployed group identities to turn their social and economic power into political power by integrating themselves into the institutions of the post-Sullan *res publica*, and the consequences of their efforts.

Steel's paper sets out the issues as they affected the Senate, whose institutional position within the *res publica* was enhanced by Sulla. Yet its membership was so now fundamentally altered that, she argues, its deliberative capacity was undermined in ways that led directly to new civil war in 49 BCE. Berrendonner expands this focus on the Senate by looking at one specific issue: the links that many of the new Sullan senators had to the public contractors, the *publicani*, whose logistical and financial activities sustained the empire. Her paper aims to map the development of the *publicani* as a political interest group following their new integration with the Senate in the post-Sullan period – an integration which was further enhanced in the post-Sullan period by modifications to the Sullan *res publica*.

The increasing complexity of Rome's empire, not least through the intensification of economic activity, led to increasing challenges for diplomats from Rome's allies and subjects. Cornwell's paper explores how diplomats shaped persuasive group identities as they performed in Rome, and the responses they received from the Senate and Roman people. The violation of *hospitium* illustrates the growing tensions between diplomats as state representatives and the interpersonal relations through which they often acted. Finally, Carlà-Uhink looks at a group which underwent perhaps the most striking transformation of status in this period: the free inhabitants of Italy who, prior to the Social War, had been members of communities allied to Rome. Now Roman citizens, their engagement with their new status as Romans, grudgingly though it was implemented by Rome, shaped not only the nature of the Roman elite into the imperial period, but also the meanings of *Roma*, *Italia* and the relationship between the two.

As a whole, the panel draws attention to a paradox. The increasing importance of these new groups within Roman politics is easily documented, not least in the sequence of events that led to the outbreak of civil war in 49. At the same time, group identities were often deployed to emphasise continuity. The story that Cicero tells in his speeches and treatises is not one of radical change resulting from Sulla's dictatorship but rather the persistence of the *res publica*. The Senate asserted its continuity, however different its membership, and the newly enfranchised Romans proclaimed their belonging as well as their distinctiveness, encapsulated in Cicero's claim to possess *duae patriae*, 'two fatherlands'. This complex articulation of integration looks ahead to Augustus' claims concerning the *res publica*, and forces us to consider what we prioritise in our definitions of the Roman *res publica* and what we neglect.

Catherine Steel (Glasgow): *Collective and group identities in the post-Sullan Senate*

The Roman dictator L. Cornelius Sulla substantially increased the size of the Senate by making the quaestorship the qualifying office for entry into the Senate and increasing the number of quaestors to twenty. Most senators would not hold another

elected office. The Senate had shifted in its composition from the seniority and engagement of its pre-Social War incarnation to a large group of mostly less experienced men. This change in the nature of the Senate as a deliberative body was accompanied by a skewing from deliberative to judicial functions: most of the public business undertaken by most post-Sullan senators was that of sitting on juries in the public courts. Alongside these radical changes were the wider changes in Roman society that followed the extension of the citizenship across Italy.

How did this new Senate function? What were the internal mechanisms which enabled it to reach decisions? I argue that the divide between an inner core of consulars and the rest of the Senate transmuted in this period into a much more profound disconnect. At least twice, in 61 and again in 56, we can observe senatorial decision-making that the consular Cicero clearly thought was counter-productive and even inexplicable; perhaps not coincidentally, these were also issues – namely Clodius' sacrilege, and the restoration of Ptolemy Auletes – which involved an urgent religious problem. The pre-Sullan ruling elite managed, with extraordinary success, to maintain its electoral success in the *comitia centuriata*, and thus its control of the consulship. But it failed to acknowledge the transformation of the Senate, and as a result senatorial decision-making diverged, in these crucial years, from the interests of the inner core. The end point was the catastrophic failure of the Senate in 51 and 50 BCE to prevent the outbreak of renewed civil war.

Clara Berrendonner (Université de Limoges): *Publicans and senators in post-Sullan Rome (78-61 BCE)*

The Ciceronian corpus repeatedly refers, between the death of Sulla and the end of the 60s, to a group defined as the *publicani*, who must have primarily been affected by the post-Sullan developments. In *Publicans and Sinners*, E. Badian wrote that 'we have no evidence for any political activity by the *publicani*, or indeed the *equites*, during the decade after his (= Sulla's) retirement'. However, he considered Sulla's dictatorship as the starting point for major changes for the publican societies: after the Social War, the granting of Roman citizenship to Italian notables would have allowed them to invest capital in the *societates*; the *lectio Senatus* of 81, by admitting knights into the Senate, would have led to an unprecedented situation where senators, now connected by family ties to *publicani*, themselves held interests in the societies. In the *locationes*, the separation between the contracting authority and the bidders would have become blurred; senators were enriching themselves by lending at interest, through intermediaries, to provincial taxpayers. Subsequently, the *lex Aurelia iudiciaria* would have granted publicans sitting in the juries of the *quaestiones* the power to ruin the careers of provincial governors. Thus, the publicans would have become an "interest group", capable of influencing Rome's foreign policy choices, but also of being one of the keys to Cicero's project of *concordia ordinum*.

The paper will strive to answer various questions. What were the consequences for the publicans of financial difficulties, transfers of assets, legislation, and changes in public contracts during the "Sulla years"? To what extent can the publicans of the 70s-60s be described as a group capable of impacting political choices? Through their example, can we better understand how non-senator Roman citizens could influence the decisions of magistrates and senators?

Hannah Cornwell (Birmingham): *hospites to fortune? Diplomatic space, emotive performances, and the violation of hospitium in post-Sullan Rome*

Sulla's enlargement of the *curia* in 81 BCE emphasised the renewed role of the senate within his reformed *res publica*. The building work also caused disruption to the usual spaces for public diplomatic audience, although alternative spaces were available to ensure 'business as usual' and by 78 BCE diplomatic activity was once again hosted in the *comitium-curia* space. This episode serves as a reminder of the dependency of diplomatic activity on fluctuations in Roman politics. Indeed, post-Sullan Rome saw manipulation of embassies for the sake of internal political struggles and its impact on Rome's management of the *imperium populi Romani*.

This paper reflects on spaces of diplomatic performance at Rome in the late Republic. This involves performances of the body (movement, dress, emotions, demure etc.) and linguistic and rhetorical performance, both in terms of actors and audience. I examine these constructions of political and diplomatic identities through interpersonal relationships and spaces of *hospitium* as an essential aspect of Roman diplomatic practice, using the Alexandrian embassy against Ptolemy XII Auletes and the various political intrigues surrounding his restoration to illustrate key points. The assassination of Dio in the house of the Coponii was a failure of the social contract of *hospitium* as well as a violation of the *ius legatorum* (Cic. *Har.*34). This in turn was connected, at least nominally, to the health of the *res publica*, as exemplified in the charges *de vi* brought against Caelius Rufus in 56 (Cic. *Cael.* 1; *Har.* 35; *Pis*. 85). The spaces and emotive performances surrounding the Alexandrian embassy of 57/6 BCE illustrate the growing influence of certain individuals over the constitutional bodies of state coupled with the necessity of interpersonal relations of diplomacy, and the negotiation of identities in relation to the *res publica* itself.

Filippo Carlà-Uhink (Universität Potsdam): *"Unity in Diversity": Italy in the Late Republican Senate*

The Social War (91-87 BCE) led to the mass enfranchisement of the communities of Italy. It was also the object of a process of memorialization and narrativization in the following generation, which transformed it in a painful, yet necessary step: the *causa* of the Italics, could later be described as *iustissima* (Vell. Pat. 2.15.2). The enfranchisement of the Italics meant the growing access of their elites to Roman magistracies, and thus to the Senate. Beyond the concrete numbers, such access also meant a change in how senators of Italic origin performed and represented their origin. The argument of "unity in diversity", which becomes the discursive model explaining Italy and its unity, e.g. in the literary genre of the *laudes Italiae*, is now valid also in parts of the Roman Senate, proudly showing their Italic families – something Cicero elaborates for example in his model of the "two fatherlands" in the second book of the Laws. Yet, Cicero had to face the opposition of "old" Roman families, slandering him as "foreigner" (e.g. Manlius Torquatus, whom Cicero opposes in the speech pro Sulla), in spite of the fact that Arpinum had received Roman citizenship well before the Social War (188 BCE). But two generations later, Quintus Varius Geminus was celebrated in the Tiberian age as *primus omnium Paelign(orum) senator* (CIL IX, 3306). It is the aim of this paper to trace this history of enfranchisement, discursive differentiation, assimilation and pride of one's own origins from Cicero to the 1st century CE, in order to show how the senatorial self-representation, both of the members of the ancient Roman families and of the Italic elites, assumed forms and developed discourses that are a direct consequence of the

Social War and of the important disruption it caused in Roman citizenship and in the Roman political system.

PANEL 04: Narrating Space in Greek Literature. Chairs: Silvia Speriani (Birmingham) and Manos Tsakiris (Manchester); venue: #tbc

The significance of space and the surrounding environment for humans has in the last decades been extensively reappraised: seminal work in the social sciences in the 1970s and 1980s gave rise to the 'spatial turn', which saw the work of e.g. Michel Foucault on *heterotopia*, Lefebvre on the production of space, Michael Bakhtin on the *chronotope*, de Certeau on space and place. This intellectual movement inevitably influenced the study of literature; its ripples continue to affect the study of ancient, Greek and Roman, literature, too. Important contributions dedicated to space in classical literature have in the last few years showcased the benefits of systematic studies of space in ancient authors (e.g. Purves 2010, Clay 2011, Thalmann 2011, Tsagalis 2012, Fitzgerald and Spentzou 2018). Nearly four decades after the 'spatial turn', space and the way the surrounding environment is described and evoked in classical literature continue to be explored. Novel approaches take a variety of directions. Some take an earth-centred approach which foregrounds the physical environment in literary works (e.g. ecocriticism) or bring attention away from humans to trace non-human agents in the surrounding environment (e.g. new materialisms). Others explore space and the human surroundings in order to understand better human thoughts, feelings and emotions, thus bringing attention back to humans (e.g. distributed cognition). Space and the environment in classical literature, to which this proposed panel will be dedicated, prove therefore to be a particularly fruitful and timely subject, lying at the forefront of often interdisciplinary scholarly investigations of literature and the ancient world through a variety of perspectives.

In this panel, we intend to open further enquiries into the role of space in ancient narratives by focusing on *how* ancient authors narrated space and how in turn the experience of space is not only an epiphenomenal result of the narrative but an active ingredient which crafts the narrative. At the core of our investigation lies an interest in comprehending some of the ways in which ancient authors conceptualised space and the environment; and consequently, how such notions were textually reflected. Focusing mainly—though not exclusively—on the ever-popular (in antiquity) literary genre of epic, and drawing on a variety of current methodological approaches (including conceptual metaphor theory, cognitive studies, and linguistic tools from Critical Discourse Analysis), we wish to investigate:

i) how ancient authors conceptualise space, the environment and landscape in literal and metaphorical discourse;
ii) how human relations with the surrounding environment and its resources affect the way in which space and landscapes are narrated in ancient texts;
iii) how the narration of space relate to the unfolding of actual and narrative time;
iv) how geography relate to myths, tales of wonder, and legends in the ancient world;
v) to what extent narrative elements pertaining to (both cultural and natural) space are genre-dependent or genre-enforcing, and whether they contribute to the construction of a narrative's meta-literary tissue;
vi) how socio-cultural dynamics and the expectations related to space affect the ways in which it is narrated and perceived.

Silvia Speriani (Birmingham): *Space(time) and epos: the borders of narrating*

In the ancient world, moving through geographical space takes time. In other words, moving through space, different landscapes, and different people means aging – in a way that, in our ultra-connected contemporary world, may resonate only with space travel. After all, in Latin, *per-ire*, to complete the journey through all its stages, also means to die. Myths and narratives seem aware of the connection: apotheosis follows the end of Hercules' journeys and, at the dawn of Western literature, Ulysses' life apparently ends with one last journey.

Sure, the borders of space can be moved, explored, extended. Up to which point? And can the *fines* of human life do the same? Caesar, as Suetonius tells us, weeps in front of the statue of Alexander in the temple of Heracles in Cadiz because, now that he has reached the same age Alexander had when he conquered the world, he – Caesar – has not yet achieved the same goals. He thus weeps because of the limitations of his human time. But he does that in Cadiz, that is, at the end of the world.

Is there a connection between geographical *fines*, human biological *fines*, and the limits to human deeds (or lack thereof)? Can the *epos* – that is, human deeds and their narration – go beyond time and space? In this contribution, I will explore ancient notions of space-time limits, and examine how ancient epic (or epic-like) narratives use these notions to shape narrative devices and meta-literary reflections on their own ability to manipulate time and space.

Manos Tsakiris (Manchester): *Charting Space in Apollonius' Argonautica*

The *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes is an epic poem in which vast expanses of land are traversed. From the familiar landscapes of Greece to the progressively lesser known and often unstable geographies along the way to and from Colchis, and the inhospitable deserts of Libya, the *Argonautica* is preoccupied with space. Inevitably, it becomes a poem *about* space. In this paper, I propose to investigate *how* Apollonius fits so much space into one poem. I am especially interested in investigating the techniques used by the narrator to give the audience a sense of space/landscape/geography without sacrificing action and audience engagement and without transforming the poem into a list of seas crossed and lands stopped at. I shall begin my exploration by comparing the narration of space in the *Argonautica* with that in the Homeric epics. Using methodology developed most recently by Purves (2010), Clay (2010), and Tsagalis (2012), I shall investigate the ways in which Apollonius deploys both the cartographic (i.e. view from above) and hodological (i.e. view from the ground) modes, as well as the intentions behind and the projected outcomes of such a combinatory yet not simultaneous use of the two modes. My focus will be on the experience of space and how it is conveyed, methodologically drawing on cognitive science. This investigation will be a starting point into determining how genre-specific the narration of space in the *Argonautica* actually is; that is, the extent to which it relies on or distances itself from established formulas and modes of narrating space in epic poetry.

Adrien Gramps (Manchester): *Sacred Space and Divine Presence in Callimachus' Book of Hymns*

The six hymns of Callimachus are his only long poems to survive in their entirety and have attracted decades of academic interest. Scholars have been drawn to the poems' richly complex relationships with the Homeric Hymns on the one hand and with Augustan poetry on the other; they have explored how the hymns relate to various

aspects of religion and politics under the Ptolemies; and they have analysed the so-called 'mimetic' mode of presentation found in hymns 2, 5, and 6. Despite all this attention, we are still missing a sustained literary treatment of all six hymns considered on their own terms as an artistic whole.

With this in mind, I will present a synthetic reading of all the Hymns as a collection with a focus on how they construct sacred space, both as an abstraction and in the concrete particularly of actual sacred spaces represented in the poems. I will argue that Callimachus' Hymns propound a poetic conception of the phenomenology of sacred space and of how divine presence manifests in relation to sacred spaces. Callimachus achieves this, I argue, by metaphorically mapping sacred space onto the spatial aspects of hymnic poetry itself, variously conceived as text, as performance, and as embodied experience. Work on sacred space and ritualisation by Eliade, Bell, and Lefebvre will inform my intratextual close reading of the Hymns as instantiations of religious practice in the medium of poetry. This will not only open up a new perspective on the Hymns as a collection, but will also offer a challenge to the long-standing reductive view of Callimachus as a poet of intellectual games untethered from lived experience.

Alison Sharrock (Manchester): *cuncta fluunt*: Scale and the Metamorphic Environment

In the final book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Pythagoras discourses upon the mutability of landscape, as part of his lecture on the metamorphic instability of all things. With the extreme temporal extension afforded him by his multiple reincarnations, the philosopher is able to claim autopsy for geographic changes which would normally be impossible for a human to observe directly, since they take place at a geological rather than human pace. In this contribution, I propose to explore the ways in which Ovid narrates geomorphic changes in the physical world, in the speech of Pythagoras and in other passages where 'supernatural/magical' and 'natural' (if extreme) changes cause drastic rearrangements of geography. Examples include the two flood myths and various stories of the formation of islands, such Aegina, the wandering Delos, and the nymphs turned into islands by the enraged river Achelous. I shall be particularly concerned with the challenges of scale and narrating time.

PANEL 05: Environment 1: Healing, Medicine and Cult. Chair: Duncan Keenan-Jones (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Alessandra Migliara (CUNY): *Seeing and Healing: Eye-Shaped Votives at the Athenian Asklepieion*

This The 4th- and 3rd-century BCE inventories from the Athenian Asklepieion (*IG* II^2 1532–1539; van Straten 1981; Aleshire 1989) have revealed a striking predominance of eye-shaped votives, which far outnumber dedications of other body parts, leading some scholars to suggest that the sanctuary specialized in the treatment of ophthalmological ailments. In this paper, I argue that this predominance can be explained by the sanctuary's topographical contiguity with the Theater of Dionysus on the South Slope of the Acropolis. As the theater was the "place of seeing" par excellence, with vision central to its meaning and function, its adjacency to the Asklepieion encouraged a special association with ocular healing.

The debate on the specialization of Asklepieia (Roebuck 1951; van Straten 1981; Oberhelman 2014) has rarely considered the unique topography of the Athenian sanctuary. In this paper, I analyze epigraphic and archaeological evidence, focusing on

Praxias' dedication (EAM15244) and other ocular votives. While the connection between theater and Asklepios, as well as the therapeutic power of theater, have long been recognized (Wiles 1999; Mitchell-Boyask 2008; Hartigan 2009), my emphasis lies on the link between theater and ocular healing. I discuss passages from Aristophanes' *Plutus* (659–747) and Sophocles' *Philoctetes* (1409–1444) that highlight this association and its relevance to the Asklepieion. I then turn to the Eukrates relief (NM5256), which, though tied to the Eleusinian cult of Demeter, situates eye healing within a dramatic context (Petridou 2016).

As vision in the Athenian theater carried cognitive and symbolic weight (Meineck 2018), I conclude that the Asklepieion's proximity to the Theater of Dionysus made it an ideal place for ocular healing. While theaters were included in Asklepieia across the Mediterranean, Athens represents an exceptional case: two distinct yet contiguous sanctuaries—the Asklepieion and the sanctuary of Dionysus—coexisted in a city that accorded unparalleled social significance to the theater.

Jurgen Gatt (Malta): *From the Nile to the Skull: Heuristic Spaces in Herodotus and Hippocratic Medicine*

This paper examines how Greek authors of the 5th Century structured knowledge by mapping their own epistemic resources (sight; testimony) onto space, whether geographical or anatomical. I juxtapose Herodotus' account of the Nile (Hdt. 2.28-32) with the Hippocratic *On Wounds in the Head* to show how both authors ground their own narratorial authority in these cognitive-spatial divisions.

The Nile is the paradigm of an investigation into space that is inherently limited: the location of the Nile's source was a typical problem of *histores*. Herodotus tells us that up to Elephantine, he saw the river himself: its channels, therefore, can be described 'panoptically'. Beyond the First Cataract, however, vision fails and the narrator's account of the 'known world' must rely on second-hand visual knowledge. Herodotus's account is thus based on a striking heuristic structure: 'seen space' is marked as beyond dispute, while 'heard space' is defined by the narrator's absence, yet still admitted as a source of knowledge.

Wounds pursues a parallel inquiry: the internal anatomy of the body too, in Hippocratic medicine, belonged to the unseen world. Some injuries can be observed, palpated, and probed, but as in Herodotus, the most critical objects of knowledge also escape vision: contusions, sutural fractures, contrecoup lesions cannot be seen by the doctor. To solve this epistemic problem, the physician also constructs an epistemic topography of skull fractures in which vision is privileged but in which testimony and patient interrogation remain an indispensable route to diagnosis.

By comparing these two case studies, I argue that Greek engagements with Egyptian landscape and human anatomy reveal a common heuristic device: the *histor* makes sense of the unknown by mapping the limits of their senses, and in so doing, transforms space into a framework for knowledge.

Kristin Heineman (Colorado State): *Delphi and Environmental Mediation*

The Oracle of Delphi, one of the most revered and enigmatic institutions of the ancient

Mediterranean, has captivated historians, archaeologists, and scholars alike for centuries. Nestled amidst the breathtaking landscape of Mount Parnassus in ancient Greece, the Oracle of Apollo held a central role in ancient religious and political affairs, with its pronouncements guiding the actions of kings, statesmen, and commoners alike. The environmental aspect of Greek religion is characterized by a

deep interconnection between the ancient Greeks and their natural surroundings. In Greek mythology and religious belief, nature was imbued with divine presence, and various natural elements were personified as gods and goddesses. These deities were believed to exert their influence on the environment and were venerated through rituals and ceremonies. As such, Greeks looked to the god Apollo for religious sanction on various environmental concerns to ensure proper care for and exploitation of the landscape, including cultivation of sacred land, plague and canal building. Several of the recorded pronouncements from Apollo speak to the centrality of these issues to people living in the ancient Mediterranean. While much attention has been devoted to the religious and socio-political aspects of the Oracle, its profound ecological significance remains an underexplored terrain. This paper aims to shed new light on the intricate interplay between the Oracle of Delphi and its surrounding environment. By analyzing the prophetic messages delivered by the Oracle and exploring their relevance to environmental concerns, resource management, and ecological crises in antiquity, this paper seeks to unravel the hitherto unexamined ecological dimensions of the Oracle and its historical context.

PANEL 06: Queer 1: Transforming Tragedy: Queer and Gender Politics in Contemporary Adaptations of Greek Drama. Chair: Christine Plastow (OU); venue: #tbc

This panel has been carefully curated to provide a space for critical discussion on recent developments within the reception of Greek tragedy, with a particular focus on the growing impulse to reimagine and revise canonical characters through the lens of queer and gender politics. Framed through the conference theme of *Queer Classics*, the panel interrogates how three ancient Athenian tragedies - *Antigone*, *Oedipus the King*, and *Medea* - have been reinterpreted in recent queer, feminist and politically engaged adaptations.

Important to this discourse is the work of Will Shüler, whose scholarship highlights how contemporary creatives are potentially responding to modern audiences by integrating marginalised voices into mainstream narratives. His examination of the queering of classical characters, often by inserting alternative storylines or reframing identity, is essential to understanding the tensions that arise between adaptation and tradition. These creative interventions may resonate differently across demographics, raising questions about authorship, representation, and, in some cases, the ethics of adaptation.

David Bullen explores radical reimaginings of Jocasta, interrogating questions of identity politics, feminist frameworks, and the ideological positions adopted by modern adapters. It is a rare occurrence for two productions of the same Greek tragedy to open on the West End in close succession, particularly when they diverge so markedly in style, interpretation, and intent. However, both productions re-examine the role of Jocasta through the lens of contemporary gender politics, an aspect that Bullen will explore in greater depth during his presentation.

Lottie Parkyn examines transformative portrayals of Polynices in contemporary versions of *Antigone*, tracing how his identity has been reshaped through political and cultural discourses currently at the forefront in both the UK and the US. Case studies include interpretations of Polynices as a religious and queer outsider, an ISIS bride, and as a past self that must be rejected by a transitioning Antigone. These distinctive interpretations depart significantly from Sophocles' original, yet, much like his work, which was intended to provoke debate within the

civic sphere, they offer a powerful platform for marginalised communities to engage with pressing contemporary issues.

Collectively, the panel engages with a range of theatrical case studies from major West End productions to independent and experimental performances. The interdisciplinary nature of this panel, bridging classical studies and theatre studies, invites a deeper analysis of how classical texts are adapted, contested, and mobilised in the service of contemporary storytelling. The three papers open up rich opportunities for collaborative discussion, centred around key overarching questions such as, can these reimaginings be understood as meaningful acts of inclusion, or do they risk slipping into the realm of performative virtue signalling?

The session will unfold in two parts: each speaker will present a 20-minute paper, followed by a brief Q&A. The final 30 minutes will take the form of a roundtable discussion, moderated by Christine Plastow. This closing segment is designed to foster dynamic engagement, allowing speakers and audience members alike to draw connections between the case studies presented and contribute diverse perspectives on the broader themes under discussion. Audience participation will be central to this portion, as a plurality of viewpoints is vital when grappling with questions of identity, representation, and the cultural authority of classical texts.

Will Shüler (Royal Holloway): *"How do you do, fellow queers?": Greek Tragedy and the Paradox of Mainstream Queer*

This paper uses popular internet memes as a lens for critiquing the inclusion of queer characters in recent West End Greek tragedy adaptations. This methodology draws upon the queer scholarly tradition of theorists such as Jack Halberstam, who employ popular culture as a critical lens. Memes such as "How do you do fellow kids?" are employed to publicly mock when organizations/people attempt to align themselves with a particular demographic (in this case young people), but through their overt and clumsy attempts, demonstrate how out of touch with the group they actually are. Memes are used to comically ridicule how these companies come across as pandering, rather than their desired effect of developing an authentic connection with a community. Particularly with instances of trying to connect with the LGBTQ+ community, these memes point towards a tension born of attempts at reconciling the marginalized with the mainstream.

This tension is also visible when mainstream theatre-makers attempt to inject queer storylines into canonical mainstays of the London theatre scene, like Greek tragedies. Dominic Cooke's 2023 *Medea* at the Soho Place and Robert Icke's 2024 *Oedipus* at the Wyndham Theatre both imagined their contemporary versions of tragedies with gay characters. These productions assume an inclusive tone in their incorporation of a gay character which might be read by a queer spectator as inadvertently missing the mark and coming across as tokenistic or virtue-signally: "how do you do, fellow queers?". While the depictions of queer characters in contemporary stagings of Greek tragedies are very welcome, they have the potential to backfire if they fail to come across as authentic inclusions of queer stories/experiences. Queer theory as a field seeks to question/trouble/make-visible normative structures, and these West End productions give space to investigate the tensions of being paradoxically both mainstream and queer.

David Bullen (Royal Holloway): *Precarious Feminisms, Precarious Worlds: Re-visioning Jocasta in Recent Adaptations by Robert Icke and Ella Hickson*

CW: Sexual assault, suicide

Early in 2025, audiences in London could see not one but two adaptations of *Oedipus the King*, playing in major venues within a few miles of one another in the heart of the city. At the subsequent Olivier Awards, the most prestigious theatre awards in the UK, two portrayals of Jocasta were nominated for best actress. Leslie Manville, whose Jocasta in Robert Icke's West End *Oedipus* was remarked on by many reviewers for the moment she confessed her traumatic past as a sexual assault survivor, won. Indira Varma's Jocasta was as different as Ella Hickson's adaptation: a pragmatist who finds herself battling against the rising irrationalism of a future Thebes suffering the extreme consequences of climate change. While Icke's Jocasta meets her Sophoclean fate to die by suicide in a gratuitously bloody reveal, Hickson's Jocasta ultimately lives on - though in refusing her advice and embracing superstition, it is implied her Thebes is slowly bringing about its own end.

The two contrasting constructions offer an opportunity to reflect on the value ascribed to artistic and political choices in adapting Greek tragedy in contemporary British theatre. Drawing on recent work in theatre and performance studies (see below), I read this adaptation practice through the lens of precarity, reframing identity politics to understand how subjectivity is implicated in, and shaped by, a range of vulnerabilities, from patriarchal social organisation through to the more-than-human world. To what extent, I ask, are these re-visions of Jocasta revealing in the way they articulate, and are (not) praised for, the writers' respective feminisms?

Lottie Parkyn (Notre Dame): *Defining the Traitor? Rethinking the character of Polynices in Contemporary Readings of Antigone*

Sophocles' *Antigone* has long provided a compelling framework through which to examine the clash of competing ideologies in society, from the devastations of war and political turmoil to the lived experiences of marginalized groups in society. At the heart of the play lies the intense relationship between Antigone and her brother Polynices, whose condemnation as a traitor by the state sharply contrasts with Antigone's devotion to familial loyalty. This conflict between personal conviction and civic duty propels the tragedy forward.

In recent adaptations across both the UK and the United States, the central dynamic of *Antigone* has been reimagined to engage with pressing sociocultural themes, including sexuality, gender identity, and, in some instances, their intersections with religious belief. This paper focuses specifically on the evolving representation of Polynices and interrogates what, in contemporary contexts, renders him a 'traitor.' Through close analysis of three recent reinterpretations - Kamal Kaan's *Aaliyah: After Antigone* (2022), which portrays Polynices as an unassuming gay man wrongly (?) accused of terrorism; JJ Sutton's *Antigone: A New Trans Play* (2022), in which Polynices is revealed to be Antigone's former identity, one she seeks to 'kill off' as part of her gender transition; and Alexander Raptotasios' *Antigone on Strike* (2025), where Polynices is reimagined as a British South Asian woman whose narrative parallels that of Shamima Begum- this paper explores how these radical reinterpretations invite civic discourse around issues that have become increasingly politicised on both sides of the Atlantic.

PANEL 07: Greek History: The Epichoric Eye. Chair: Samuel Gartland (Leeds); venue: #tbc

In recent years, the term epichoric has steadily gained prominence in classical studies, with

scholars increasingly using it to describe a diverse array of localised practices, traditions, and communal self-understandings across the ancient Greek world. It has appeared in historical, archaeological, literary, and linguistic contexts, often as a means of capturing the nuances of local cultures that are distinct from a more generalized or canonical set of norms. Despite its growing usage, the meaning of epichoric remains fluid and vague; in fact, it is applied in a descriptive sense and used as an analytical category, two distinct trajectories that are often conflated, with little further attention to ramifications suggested by either. All the while, the term prompts us to reconsider the basic configuration of Greek culture, spanning across the wide gulf of local and universal practices, and to explore how epichoric traditions shaped the lives of communities throughout the world of ancient Greece.

In our panel, we take stock with the epichoric trait of Greek culture. Our papers trace and sort the debate within and across classical studies disciplines. Doing so, they argue that the epichoric is not simply a synonym for local but rather a dynamic, layered, and adaptive phenomenon that assigns meaning and purpose to specific places, practices, and performances. If we are to understand Greek history more fully, we must engage with the epichoric not as a marginal or divergent aspect of Greek life, but as a core quantity of the historical development.

The aim is twofold: First, to sharpen the definition of epichoric by showing how the term can be used precisely and productively, rather than loosely as a synonym for "local." Second, to illustrate the interpretative gains that follow: an enriched understanding of how communities in the ancient Greek world narrated themselves, and how their audiences—contemporary and later—engaged with those narratives. Our papers, drawn from literature, historiography, archaeology, and epigraphy, explore how texts and objects, monumental dedications and everyday vessels, articulated distinctive attachments to land, practice, and community. Poetry and material culture, inscription and ritual, each provide different perspectives on how the epichoric was performed, transmitted, and guarded.

By combining these perspectives, the panel shows how the epichoric provides a unifying framework for understanding the diversity of Greek culture. It highlights the ways in which communities expressed their distinctiveness through rooted practices, how such expressions were received and understood, and how environment and audience shaped the articulation of meaning. Far from being marginal or parochial, the epichoric was a central mode of cultural expression: a way of grounding tradition in land and community, of using environment and resource to articulate meaning, and of engaging audiences in the ongoing negotiation of distinctiveness within wider Greek culture.

The panel speaks directly to the conference theme of Environment, Resources and the Ancient World. The epichoric is inseparable from the Greek *chōra*—inhabited, cultivated, socially inscribed land. Environment and resource were not passive settings but formative elements of meaning, whether through sanctuaries aligned with local topography, dedications in native stone, or vessels made for specific landscapes and cults. The panel also engages with *Inscriptions and their Audiences*, exploring how epichoric traditions were recorded, displayed, and received. Crucially, environment and inscription often intersect: texts and monuments embedded in the land both materialised and advertised claims of rootedness. Together, these perspectives highlight the epichoric as a dynamic framework linking place, practice, and audience.

After a very brief introduction from the chair, session will consist of 4 x 20 min papers with 10 minutes for questions and discussion after each paper. Speakers

have been selected to bring to the CA a balance of early, mid-career, and senior scholars from different disciplines and scholarly traditions.

Emma Aston (Reading): *Epichoric conversations: dialogic tradition-building in Thessaly and Delphi*

The epichoric dimension of Greek history and culture has often been viewed as a relatively simple one: local in scale, limited in scope, involving a specific set of actors within a particular region, sub-region or community. This has fuelled its appeal in some quarters (as it offers an 'authentic' view of life 'on the ground', untrammelled by the complexities of sophisticated panhellenic culture); in general, however, it has proved a factor in its marginalisation, allowing it to be relegated to a second tier of Classical historiography.

This paper will use two test-case sources to show that, in fact, by the time the epichoric reaches our gaze it is anything but simple: acts of writing and recording always entail complex interplays with the panhellenic, whether the author is an 'insider' or an 'outsider'. More than that, the presence of the outsider provides a key stimulus to the articulation of epichoric identities. It is their performative, demonstrative aspect which means epichoric sources actually reach us at all. Nor is the outsider merely a seeing eye – rather, they play an active role in shaping and galvanising the traditions surrounding a place and its people.

The two exempla chosen are deliberately contrasting. One is surely our most influential conduit of epichoric tradition and culture: Pausanias (and specifically his description of Delphi). The other is a Hellenistic verse-inscription from south-east Thessaly, in which the purely local is intriguingly elusive, but the ties binding the community in with the wider Greek world are plainly advertised. This is not a contrast between the sophisticated Periegete and a hick stone-cutter in Achaia Phthiotis; rather, both texts display a dynamic interplay between local and panhellenic and between different registers of oral and written tradition.

Hans Beck (Münster): *Aigina between Athens and Thebes: Epichoric Reasoning in Herodotus*

On a well-known incident in book 5 of his Histories, Herodotus elaborates on the triangular relations between Aigina, Athens, and Thebes on the eve of Salamis. The episode has attracted quite some scholarly attention; involvement of the so-called the Aiakids, notorious cult images that were sent to Thebes to aid Aigina's ally in war, has triggered questions about the nature of these Aiakids, their material design as much as their spiritual powers. In Herodotus' narrative, they set in motion a curious side-story that explains why Aigina and Athens were at odds in the first place: quarrels had arisen over another set of cult statues, those of Damia and Auxesia, the history of which had triggered a cycle of violence and vengeance between both.

I will re-examine the incident in my paper. At first glance, Herodotus' remarks appear as one super aitiology, crafted from a series of explanations of a wide range of cultural traditions and phenomena, including local festivals and rituals, dress cultures, and cult objects. Careful attention to his reasoning, both the line of argument and the language employed, reveals however a web of epichoric instantiations, incidents that were both subject to local traditions and their physical rooting in place. Herodotus' text, I shall argue, should be read as a prime example for the deep connection between ritual practice and the land – a connection that is made visible only if embrace the epichoric as a distinct, dynamic, and indeed defining feature at the heart of ancient Greek culture.

Sophia Nomicos (Münster): *Beyond the local: Tracing "the epichoric" in ancient Greek material culture*

While the term "epichoric" is used widely in historical and philological scholarship it is hardly ever used in archaeology. Instead, we find that more descriptive terms such as "local" are employed. This can be explained by the fact that philologists and historians can trace the embeddedness of local practice through text and ritual, while archaeologists encounter material traces whose social meanings are often less explicit. This raises an important question: can epichoric qualities be detected in the objects, monuments, and spaces crafted and used by communities?

This paper explores the question through the religious sphere, where epichoric qualities are most readily legible. Case studies from Athens, Sparta, and other poleis test how material culture expressed rootedness in land, myth, and ritual. Were sanctuaries, monuments, or votives not only locally made, but shaped by—and in turn shaping—the cultural landscapes in which they stood?

The two aims of the paper are first to distinguish between the merely local (objects that mark provenance) and the truly epichoric (objects inseparable from the cultural and environmental conditions of place); and second to assess the interpretative value of applying the term to archaeology. By doing so, the paper argues that the epichoric can sharpen archaeological analysis, providing a vocabulary for cultural embeddedness where land and community are co-articulated.

Samuel Gartland (Leeds): *From Ode to Object: Performing the Epichoric in Literature and Ritual*

This paper explores how epichoric traditions are articulated in both literature and material culture from the same polis: ancient Thebes. The term *epichoric* (ἐπιχώριος), often glossed as "local" or "native," in fact signals something deeper than provenance: the embeddedness of practices, beliefs, and forms in the social and physical landscape of a community. By juxtaposing two very different Theban corpora—Pindar's epinician odes and the ceramic assemblage known as Kabeirion ware—I aim to show how epichoric attitudes could be expressed in distinct but complementary registers.

Pindar, Thebes' most famous poetic voice, repeatedly invokes the epichoric to bind athletic achievement to place, ancestry, and divine favour. Even in odes intended for wide dissemination across the Greek world, his language insists on rootedness: local games, cults, and myths become the frameworks through which excellence is given meaning. The Kabeirion sanctuary, by contrast, manifests the epichoric in material terms. Its distinctive drinking vessels, produced only for use within the sanctuary and tied to restricted ritual practices, embodied a form of cultural expression that could not be transplanted elsewhere without losing its function.

By placing Pindar and the Kabeirion side by side, this paper highlights how the same polis articulated its local distinctiveness through both words and objects. Text and material culture together illuminate the epichoric not as a marginal curiosity, but as a central mode of self- expression in Greek life.

PANEL 08: Commemoration 1: Death by Water. Remembering and Honoring the Dead in Antiquity. Organisers and Chairs: Carlo Delle Donne (Università degli Studi "G. d'Annunzio") and Ide François (KU Leuven); venue: #tbc

The panel "*Death by Water.* Remembering and Honoring the Dead in Antiquity*"* explores the ways in which ancient cultures confronted the often ungraspable nature of death—especially when it was sudden, distant, anonymous, or self-inflicted—and sought to honor and remember those who perished in such circumstances. Drawing its title and conceptual framework from T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and the poem's fourth section, *Death by Water*, the panel brings together literary, philosophical, epigraphic, and reception-based perspectives to examine how Greco-Roman antiquity reckoned with various challenging aspects of death—both materially and imaginatively. Eliot's *The Waste Land* is introduced by an epigraph with the ancient Cumaean Sibyl's words "I want to die" (Petr. *Sat.* 48.8). Did the ancients openly acknowledge the voluntary nature of deaths in their commemoration? In *Death by Water*, the figure of Phlebas the Phoenician, drowned and lost to the sea, becomes a haunting image of death's inescapability and the disintegration of human identity in the vastness of nature. The poem deliberately withholds resolution—Phlebas' body is not recovered, his burial never described. This ambiguity invites reflection on ancient attitudes toward the dead whose bodies could not be properly buried and toward the value of burial in general.

The first paper (I. François, *Phlebas' Bones: Eliot and Roman Reflections on the Fate of the Dead Body*) responds to this by exploring Roman texts from Lucretius to Silius Italicus, which contemplate the significance—or insignificance—of burial rites for the deceased. While funerary ritual played a central role in Roman society, some ancient thinkers and poets questioned the necessity or even the value of these customs. This presentation considers the philosophical and poetic tensions between corporeal treatment and post-mortem meaning, and how Roman culture navigated the realities of death without recovery or ritual closure.

The second contribution (I. Künzer, *Cutting the Thread of Life – Inscribing and Commemorating Suicide in Ancient Greece*) turns to the phenomenon of suicide in the ancient Greek world, foregrounded by the sibyl's haunting words in the epigraph to The Waste Land: "I want to die." Although a relatively limited number of ancient suicides are documented, even fewer funerary inscriptions explicitly acknowledge the act. This paper investigates the epigraphic traces of suicide, asking how (and if) tombstones addressed the voluntary nature of the deceased's death. Drawing from epigrams inscribed on tombs, it considers whether suicide was openly memorialized or concealed, and what linguistic and visual strategies were employed to shape public memory of these deaths.

The third paper (A. Gullo, *Death by water in Greek funerary epigrams*) focuses specifically on the sea as both a literal and symbolic site of death in the ancient imagination. Book 7 of the Greek Anthology contains numerous epigrams for those who died by water: sailors lost in storms, fishermen taken by rivers, merchants drowned in foreign harbors. These epitaphs, often cenotaphic in nature, speak to the cultural challenge of commemorating a body that is absent. The presentation highlights how Greek poets creatively adapted epitaphic conventions to give voice to the lost and forge connection between the living and the dead, even in the absence of physical remains. The paper thus illuminates the central role of poetic imagination in bridging the space between memory and materiality when honoring the drowned.

Finally, the fourth paper (A. Feuth, *'Death by water': T. S. Eliot's* The Waste Land *and Black Classicism*) reframes "death by water" as a motif of reception, reading Eliot's poem as part of a larger network of Black Classicism that draws on Greco-Roman intertexts to reflect on loss, memory, and the afterlife. The descent into the sea echoes the katabasis motif in classical literature, but also resonates deeply with the Middle Passage and the trauma of transatlantic slavery. From Derek Walcott's *Omeros* to Marlene NourbeSe Philip's *Zong!* and Asiya Wadud's *Syncope*, this paper traces how artists of the African diaspora have re-appropriated the classical theme of "death by water" to mourn and memorialize those who were lost to the sea under the violence of empire, colonialism, and migration. These modern works, like ancient epitaphs, seek to restore dignity, individuality, and presence to the anonymous dead.

Together, the four papers illuminate the enduring resonance of death and its problematic nature as a theme that transcends time and geography. They show how Greco-Roman cultures, through literature, philosophy, and epigraphy, grappled with death's erasures and absences, and how later writers and thinkers, such as Eliot, have drawn on these ancient responses to shape their own commemorative strategies. Whether through poetic cenotaphs, philosophical reflection, or political reimagining, the act of remembering the deceased remains a powerful ritual of collective mourning—and of cultural continuity.

Ide François (KU Leuven): *Phlebas' Bones: Eliot and Roman Reflections on the Fate of the Dead Body*

In T.S. Eliot's Death by Water, Phlebas, the Phoenician merchant, dies by drowning. The poem's general message – or rather, warning – seems clear: memento mori – remember that death can come at any moment. It spares no one, whether "Gentile or Jew", "handsome and tall" or aged and frail. Fortune takes its course. Yet, as is typical throughout Eliot's The Waste Land, of which Death by Water constitutes the fourth section, the context remains vague – Eliot did not even provide explanatory notes for this section in the first book publication of the poem (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1922). Who is Phlebas? Why did he die? Was his body ever recovered and buried, or did he undergo the so-called sailor's death? What became of his "bones", which were "picked in whispers" by "a current under sea", "entering the whirlpool"?

This paper engages with that ambiguity and with Eliot's conscious choice to leave unresolved the fate of the merchant's body after death, by examining Roman attitudes toward the disposal of the dead. In fact, while funerary rituals occupied a prominent place in Greco-Roman society, not all contemporaries believed such rites held significance for the deceased themselves. Numerous ancient sources reflect on the vanitas of funerary practices, with some even questioning the necessity of burial or cremation altogether.

Through a close reading of Latin passages from the late Republic and early Imperial periods – including works by Lucretius, Cicero, Vergil, Ovid, and Silius Italicus – this paper explores Roman perspectives on the treatment of the dead body. It aims to illuminate how philosophical, poetical, and practical considerations intersected – and sometimes conflicted – in Roman conceptions of death and the afterlife.

Isabelle Künzer (Justus-Liebig-University of Giessen): *Cutting the Thread of Life – Inscribing and Commemorating Suicide in Ancient Greece*

"ἀποθανεῖν θέλω" – this statement of the sibyl from Petronius' Satyricon at the very beginning of The Waste Land immediately announced one of the underlying themes

of Eliot's poem: the wish to die. A total of approximately 400 cases of suicide have been documented in a variety of sources from the ancient Greek world. This is a relatively exceptional record regarding an ancient phenomenon. However, the number of tombstones known to belong to individuals who committed suicide in this cultural sphere is considerably much smaller.

The lecture will examine these funerary inscriptions, which are typically epigrams. Individuals not implicated in the case in question, such as passers-by, were also confronted with this particular form of death. The following questions will be addressed based on the epigraphic material: Was it possible to express the fact of death by suicide at all, or was the voluntary termination of one's own life concealed on the tombstone? How did these inscriptions address suicide as a modus moriendi? What terminology or images were employed to describe suicide? What ideas are associated with this, and what does this reveal about attitudes towards suicide in general? How was the deceased spoken of in this context?

In the realm of classical studies, these funerary inscriptions have not yet been compiled and examined with regard to their potential to provide information on suicide. In this context, the lecture will specifically seek parallels to the representation of natural forms of death in the medium of funerary epigrams. It will also draw comparisons to the commemoration of suicides in the epigraphic medium in modern times. The presentation's objective is twofold: Firstly, it aims to illuminate the quotidian practice of suicide in the Greek world by means of an analysis of commemoration practices. Secondly, the lecture is poised to relativise the peculiarity and strangeness typically associated with suicide in comparison to other forms of death in the ancient Greek world.

Arianna Gullo (Independent scholar): *Death by water in Greek funerary epigrams*

A large number of funerary epigrams preserved in Book 7 of the Greek Anthology, are dedicated to fishermen, mariners, sailors, merchants and, more in general, to those who lost their lives at sea or in ways connected with water, whether it is the sea, a river, a lake or even the harbour itself. Death by water was probably as common as childbirth, sadly making particularly flourishing and productive both these subgenres of epitaphs. Remembering and honouring a dead by water often means to pay a tribute to an empty tomb, that is, a cenotaph, because the body is buried in a foreign land (in the best cases) or lost at sea. This paper aims at showing the most remarkable epigrammatic cases from Book 7 dedicated to the shipwrecked and the ways in which epigrammatists creatively play with the conventions of this subgenre.

Amaranth Feuth (Leiden University): Death by water: T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land and Black Classicism

'Death by water', the phrase in the title of this panel taken from T. S. Eliot's influential poem *The Waste Land* (1922), suggests that Eliot's seminal poem is treated as a window reference to the Greco-Roman texts the panel will discuss. In this paper I will, therefore, analyse 'death by water' as an ancient theme found in *The Waste Land* that has several times gained momentum within Black Classicism. It will become clear that the texts highlighted in this paper form a web of receptions connecting to Greco-Roman intertexts as well as anglophone 'classics', not only *The Waste Land* but also William Shakespeare's play The *Tempest*.

For Eliot water is one of the four ancient elements, in particular the one connected to baptism and rebirth. 'Death by water', therefore, evokes the ancient motif of the underworld descent. Wilson Harris' *Palace of the Peacock* (1960), set in

sixteenth-century Guyana, directly refers to this. ‘Death by water’ is also central to texts engaging with the Middle Passage, varying from Derek Walcott’s *Omeros* (1990) to Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987) and Marlene NourbeSe Philip’s poem *Zong!* (2008). While Walcott addresses the bones of the dead on the floor of the Caribbean Sea in a maritime underworld descent alluding to the song of Ariel from The Tempest, Morrison and Philip try to evoke the time of the drowning itself and to give these dead a voice. A fresh refitting of the theme is found in the poem *Syncope* by Asiya Wadud (2019) about the ‘left-to-die-boat’ that drifted about the Mediterranean Sea in 2011.

FRIDAY 10 APRIL - SESSION 2: 13.00-15.00

PANEL 9: Philosophy 1. Chair: Jenny Bryan (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Jiangtao Xiong, (Edinburgh), *Moral Luck, Identity, and Cosmic Justice in Plato's Myth of Er*

The Myth of Er at the conclusion of Plato's Republic is often criticised for its confusing fusion of post-mortem judgment with a seemingly deterministic model of reincarnation. This apparent conflict has led many scholars to view the myth as a chaotic and philosophically unnecessary addition. This paper argues instead that the myth's determinism is compatible with moral responsibility, and that the combination of judgement and reincarnation constitutes an attempt to resolve the problem of "moral luck". Through the form of mythos, Plato presents a conception of how chance, necessity, and free choice together shape one's life. Although multiple aspects are predetermined before each new life, the soul's internal moral character (taxis) is never pre-ordained. This openness preserves the soul's freedom to cultivate virtue regardless of the intersection of social disadvantages or privileges one inherits. This unique structure therefore neutralises the impact of factors often attributed to random luck, such as one's birth, social position, environment, or even life events, on an individual's genuine happiness. In this way, the myth does not simply close the dialogue with a decorative or even deceptive story, but supplements the philosophical arguments by presenting a model of corrective cosmic justice.

Giorgia Lugani (Cambridge): *The Noise of Thought: Digression as a Philosophical Strategy in Plato's Dialogues*

This paper explores digression as a constitutive element of philosophical dialogue in Plato. Far from being a marginal or ornamental device, digression reflects the thematic mobility and argumentative shifts that define dialectic itself. The plurality of interlocutors and perspectives staged by Plato inevitably generates transitions from one theme to another, yet digressions also serve to harmonize these voices: by introducing small detours, the guiding speaker brings divergent paths into convergence, thereby advancing dialectical agreement and the search for truth.

At once theoretical and meta-philosophical, digression emerges as a necessary tool for philosophical writing. It trains Plato's "model readers" to exercise memory, to connect arguments across different stages of the discussion, and to inhabit the very "noise of thought" that precedes the stabilization of conclusions. In this sense, digression conveys both the wandering of philosophy and the effort of thinking.

As a case study, I analyse two key digressions: *Phaedrus* 245c2–249d3 and *Theaetetus* 172c1–177c5. I propose a distinction between hypotactic digressions, in which a secondary argument is embedded within the main discussion and reshapes its direction, and paratactic digressions, which unfold as apparently autonomous sequences standing alongside the central line of thought. These categories, I argue, not only illuminate two distinct modes of Platonic argumentation, but also reveal how Plato uses digression to guide readers through complex philosophical problems.

By reframing digression as a central structural and philosophical feature of the dialogues, this paper contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Plato's literary techniques and to broader debates on the interplay between philosophy, rhetoric, and narrative in classical antiquity.

Enrico Piergiacomi (Pegaso University of Naples): *Why was Mochus Considered the Founder of Atomism? Posidonius on Atoms, Pythagoreans, Technology*.

Leucippus and Democritus are traditionally credited as the founders of atomism. However, Posidonius presents a different account, attributing the discovery to the shadowy figure of the Phoenician Mochus of Sidon. While historically dubious, Posidonius' claim warrants examination for two reasons.

Firstly, Posidonius argued that the Phoenicians pioneered all arts and sciences. The Stoic's attribution of atomism to Mochus would have reinforced his view, echoed in Seneca's *Epistle* 90, that the earliest philosophers were also practical scientists. This bolstered his argument for philosophy's practical and productive nature. The second reason might have been to connect atomism with Pythagoreanism, which Posidonius saw as beneficial for comprehending the soul and nature. Iamblichus reports that Mochus was viewed as a "physiologist-mystic" who taught Pythagoras. If Posidonius shared this belief, he might have argued that Leucippus and Democritus'; atomism originated from Pythagorean metaphysics. As a consequence, he may have elevated pre-Epicurean atomism as a venerable doctrine capable of aiding in the exploration of controversial topics such as the soul and the natural world.

Johanna Tykkyläinen (University of Eastern Finland): Augustine's Pedagogy of Suffering

Why is learning such a pain? Augustine of Hippo (354-430) has the answer – as he usually does. It all began in the garden of Eden with a very simply commandment not to eat from a particular tree, but we all know how that went. If the omniscient God foresaw what would transpire, why would he issue Adam and Eve a decree at all?

Augustine's answer is surprisingly, 'for pedagogical purposes.' It is an answer he recycles to such an extent that it is a bit of a puzzler why it has not garnered more academic interest. Why is life a struggle with all the pain, frailty, and what have you? 'That you might learn to be patient and cleave to God,'says Augustine. Why must a pupil be struck? 'To facilitate erudition,' he replies. Why do infants suffer even though they are incapable of learning from it due to their stage of life? 'God's ways are mysterious; dumdums should learn to be silent,' mutters he.

In Augustine's thought, the wretched toils of students are part of the comeuppance of sin. Human intelligence, among other things, took a serious hit because of Adam and Eve. In addition, the first sinners were punished with unending labour and tribulations which are also present when their descendants wish to learn anything. Since God saw fit to teach human beings through pain and punishment, Augustine does not question such methods in schooling, just bemoans the fact that they work. However, only those who are able to comprehend why they are being struck should be beaten in the name of education.

This paper is based on my dissertation and will hence focus on Augustine's mature views as expressed in his anti-Pelagian works.

PANEL 10: Africa 2: Receptions. Chair: Phil Booth (MMU); venue: #tbc

Lanyu Chen (Cambridge): *Treacherous Egyptians: Rewriting the Death of Pompey in Early Modern England*

Early modern England witnessed a surge of interest in dramatising the fall of the late Roman Republic, as playwrights reimagined the rivalry between Pompey and Caesar for both closet drama and the public stage. This corpus spans several decades and includes landmark translations of French plays, such as Thomas Kyd's rendering of

Robert Garnier's *Cornelia* (1594) and Katherine Philips's translation of Pierre Corneille's *Pompey* (1663). Other works, such as the anonymous *Caesar's Revenge* (1607) and Philip Massinger and John Fletcher's *The False One* (1621), likewise grapple with the themes of civil war and its aftermath.

Early modern dramatists were drawn not only to the rise of Caesar and the devastation of Rome's civil wars but also to the contested role of Egyptians in Pompey's murder. Their portrayals often stress the moral and political stakes of Egyptian intervention. In *The False One*, for instance, Caesar reacts with fury to Pothinus's defiance: '[…] Be braved thus? | And be compelled to bear this from a slave, | That would not brook great Pompey his superior?' (5.2.50–2) Caesar's outrage here marks not merely a response to the Egyptians' betrayal of Pompey but a broader anxiety over social rank, legitimacy, and foreign intrusion. Lucan's *Bellum Civile* was an indispensable source for such reimaginings, with its expansive treatment of Cleopatra and the Ptolemaic court's involvement in Roman affairs. Building on Jonathan Tracy's *Lucan's Egyptian Civil War* and on early modern translations of *Bellum Civile* in English (e.g., Christopher Marlowe's Book 1 and Thomas May's translation and *Continuation*), this paper examines how Lucan's narratives were received, reshaped, and dramatised alongside Plutarch's influences, and how they helped construct 'treacherous Egyptians' as central to early modern retellings of Pompey's death amid Rome's civil wars.

Katherine Wills (London): *An Æthiopian (Natural) Historie: Reading Heliodorus in Early Modern Europe, c.1534-1670*

In a manuscript titled 'Ratio Legenda Historiae', the scholar Petrus Olivarius advised the young King Edward VI to 'drink up chorography from Heliodorus' in order to learn about the regions of Ægypt and Æthiopia. Olivarius's instruction marks one of the earliest datable engagements with Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* in England and, at the same time, reveals a characterisation of the classical text that has so far been overlooked in scholarship. What did it mean to read Heliodorus's text as a chorography in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? What can this tell us about the reception and dissemination of the *Aethiopica* within European cultures of knowledge? By expanding the types of sources typically included in reception studies, a critical, albeit complex, route of transmission for the classical text can be explicated. Marginal annotations inscribed on copies of Vincent Obsopoeus' first edition of the Greek text (1534) along with citations, references to, and extracts of Heliodorus within natural histories and encyclopaedias demonstrate how readers mined the pages of the *Aethiopica* for information on the animals, minerals, and landscapes surrounding the River Nile. While Olivarius lamented that the antiquity of Heliodorus, alongside Pliny, Strabo, and Herodotus, was detrimental to the use and authority of classical geographers and historians in the early modern world, the *Aethiopica* nevertheless remained as a cited source of information in early modern natural history well into the seventeenth century. This paper will therefore also ask how early modern naturalists established and scrutinised the authority of the *Aethiopica* through the acts of excerption, citation, and repetition.

Anthony Sheppard (Independent Scholar): *Aseneth, Wife of Joseph: A Heroine for All Times and Places*

This paper will survey the very wide reception of the story of Joseph's marriage to Aseneth, daughter of an Egyptian priest. My starting point is the Greek text known as *Joseph and Aseneth,* which is included in collections of the 'Old Testament

Pseudepigrapha'. Recent scholarship tends to see the varying recensions of this text not so much as deviations from a lost *Urtext,* as multiple elaborations of a basic storyline, the germ of which is the one sentence mentioning Joseph's marriage at Gen. 41:45. I take this view of the text as licence to look more widely at dissemination of the story in contemporary popular culture, as well as the reception, more conventionally understood, of the text we have.

The paper will briefly summarise the story as we have it in the Greek text and note widely divergent views on dating and context. The text is generally held to have originated in Egypt. I will then survey the wide dissemination of the text, in some cases via a medieval Latin summary, from late antique Ethiopia to 18th century Iceland.

The paper will focus on the reception of the storyline in circles where neither the Greek text nor a translation of it were necessarily known. This has not received much attention from scholars. After mentioning the romantic portrayal of Aseneth in Handel's oratorio *Joseph and his Brothers,* the paper will present the more striking results of a viewing of some 25 YouTube videos and a reading of 4 romantic novels, 2 children's stories and a play addressing the story from various angles. Where possible, audio and video clips will be included in the presentation.

Charlie Downing (Durham): *The history of Alexandria through Individuals and Receptions*

This paper examines aspects of the ancient city of Alexandria that preserve the city's history and present its reception in unique ways, firstly examining the obscure identities of two drastically unknown individuals, Abdaraxus and Oenanthe, who have been largely lost to the disinterest of historians and scholars and the passage of time. Each figure seemed to have an impact on those around them, with Abdaraxus being notable as a "machine-maker" and Oenanthe, a woman with great connections to Ptolemy IV Philopater. Abdaraxus and Oenanthe demonstrate the loss of individual lives in the obscurity of a city's history, but through their names alone we may attest their existence and influence. In the second half of this paper, I discuss the poetry of C. P. Cavafy, a native Alexandrian, whose words bridged a literary and civil gap between the subjects of the ancient *Alexandrian Kings* and the Alexandrians bombarded in the Anglo-Egyptian war of 1882. In turn, I examine E. M. Forster's *Pharos & Pharillon*, which forms a reminiscent, memorialised city of heritage and culture, a preserved history, but one which is stamped by Forster's privileged scholarly upbringing, his Romantic notions, and ignorance to the still-standing soul-filled city of Alexandria. Through an assessment of these individual aspects of Alexandria's history, I argue that the city is partially preserved in faceless historical figures and literary depictions.

PANEL 11:Commemoration 2: Commemorating the Dead in Roman Culture. Chair: Julene Abad Del Vecchio (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Simran Frontain (London): *Solaciolum sui doloris*: Grief, loss, death, and mourning in Catullus' sparrow poems (*c.*s 2, 3) and their significance to further portrayals of grief, loss, death, and mourning across the collection

Grief, loss, death, and mourning constitute significant yet often underexamined themes in Catullus' *carmina*. While scholarly attention has flocked to sombre poems mourning the death of Catullus' brother (e.g., Feldherr 2000, Fitzgerald 1995, Paratore 1963, Quinn 1973), this paper contends it is actually Catullus' sparrow poems' (*cs*. 2, 3), frequently read for their playful innuendo, that present the

carmina's first instance of grief and loss, introducing the themes and providing a paradigm for Catullus' subsequent portrayals of grief, loss, death, and mourning. Using a methodology combining close reading, intertextual analysis with Greek epigram and Roman funerary epitaph, and theoretical frameworks drawn from narratology and psychoanalysis, I demonstrate grief is a pervasive theme in the seemingly playful sparrow poems and they introduce key vocabulary, imagery, and stylistic features used in Catullus' portrayals of grief, loss, death, and mourning, including Catullus' loss of Lesbia (her leaving him), Catullus' brother's death (*c*s. 65, 68, 101), Attis' loss of masculinity (*c*. 63), and Ariadne's abandonment by Theseus (*c*. 64). Poetic lamentation (or analogously character's speeches) allows the *persona* to process grief, achieve emotional catharsis, and provide perspective on their loss. In cases of death (sparrow, brother, hypothetically Allius), poetry functions as a memorial (tribute) to the dead and like funerary epigram (where the deceased speaks or acts from beyond-the-grave), Catullus' ambiguous use of narrative time preserves the deceased alive in the poem's literary present, when it is read/recited (elaborated on in the paper). After analysing the sparrow poems and later poems' reprisal of linguistic, stylistic, and thematic tropes introduced by the sparrow poems, I conclude by considering the poetic *persona*'s wish for his poetry's immortality (*c*.1.10), suggesting the sparrow serves as an allegorical figure for Catullus' own poetry, chirping whenever the poem is read/recited. This paper offers a new reading of the sparrow poems, contributes to a greater understanding of Catullus' poetry, and has broad implications for studies of similar themes across Greco-Roman literature.

Kristian Wong (Glasgow): *Remembering Tullia*

Commemoration of elite dead during the Roman Republic was heavily gendered – even at the end of the Republic there were limited opportunities for the physical memorialisation of elite women – when Cicero's daughter Tullia died in 44 BCE, he therefore was confronted by the lack of good exemplars upon which to base her commemoration. The abandoned apotheosis of Tullia, endeavoured through the composition of the *consolatio* and the attempted creation of a physical shrine, has seldom been treated as a genuinely innovative experiment in extending the traditional forms of elite commemoration through the extraordinary schema of apotheosis – which was not *yet* an acceptable form of memorialisation at Rome. This paper will demonstrate that there have been two key problems with interpretations of this episode. Firstly, previous attempts to assess Cicero's efforts to commemorate Tullia with apotheosis either circumvent the expansion of commemorative practices by supposing an ulterior motive – and therefore a lack of sincerity on Cicero's part – (Martelli, 2016) or dismiss Cicero's endeavour as merely commemorative without recognising its innovative aspects or their full implications (Baltussen, 2009 & Shackleton Bailey, 2004: 406). Secondly, the problems which Cicero's project of commemoration aimed to resolve have not – until now – been recognised, namely, the lack of avenues through which elite women might be memorialised, their legacies established within the context of a greater familial narrative, and their families thus consoled. Therefore, this paper will challenge conventional approaches to the topic by taking Cicero at his word concerning the instruments of commemoration and their purposes; it will set out the precise systems, processes, and precedents which Cicero both utilised and abrogated in order provide his daughter with a novel form of the kind of meritocratic commemoration which was traditionally reserved for men.

Harvey Phythian (Cambridge): *Shrouding all recollection of grief: Ambrose of Milan's obituary speeches*

Plato's In the course of his episcopate in Milan (374-97), Ambrose delivered three obituary speeches. One for his brother, Satyrus (378), one for the emperor Valentinian II (392), and one for the emperor Theodosius I (395). In these very public acts of commemoration, Ambrose formulates both his authority as a bishop and the identity of his community of listeners in Milan. By looking at all three speeches, I hope to connect Ambrose's uses of memory – both as the pointed commemorative act involved in services for the dead and the memory of the living which stands in for that of the dead. Ambrose not only constructs his memories of those he mourns, but he also draws on their shared experiences in order to give a picture of their life which he and the audience can share in and later remember. In the case of Ambrose's brother, this is pointedly personal. Ambrose emotionally commemorates his brother as an example of Christian duty and devotion, encouraging his audience to behave in a similar, Christ-like way. It is important to raise the significance of politics and status in these speeches. Ambrose's speech for his brother directly confronts his own abandonment of high office for the church, but still all of these pieces are polished in their rhetoric. In the latter two speeches, for two emperors, Ambrose especially recalls his own influence on the highest authorities of the empire as part of their ideal rulership. Ambrose's commemorations of emperors are as much monuments to his own power and the power of the Church as they are to the deceased. Ambrose does not just suggest an identity for his audience; he makes one for himself. In this paper, I scrutinise how the emotional constructions of a practiced late-antique rhetorician reasserted aristocratic power in the office of bishop.

Sonia Voinea (UCLouvain): *Eternal Birthdays: the Poetics of the Dies Natalis, from Tibullus to Statius*

Since the early 20th century, scholars have studied under the label "Latin genethliac poetry" a corpus of poems celebrating birthdays, written between the 1st century BCE and the 6th century CE. Within this corpus, a few of them celebrate the birthdays of deceased poets or philosophers (e.g. Stat. *Silv.* 2.7; Mart. 7.21–23; 11.48–49; 12.67; Phld. *AP* 11.44). Yet scholars have observed that the genethliac corpus is marked less by shared stylistic features than by independence and originality. A few key questions arise from this observation: what forms of literary innovation does this poetry embody, and how does it intersect with funerary poetry, its thematic opposite? Can birthday poetry be considered a literary genre in Antiquity? How does the emergence of the *dies natalis* theme in the 1st century BCE relate to its socio-political context, particularly the imperial celebration of Augustus' birthday?

This paper reexamines (1) the classification and interpretation of birthday poetry in modern scholarship, (2) Tibullus' first birthday poem (*Elegy* 1.7), traditionally regarded as the genre's point of departure, and (3) Statius' poem for the dead Lucan (*Silv.* 2.7), characterized by stylistic hybridity and regularly excluded from the genethliac corpus.

The first section surveys the history of scholarship, beginning with Emanuele Cesareo (1929), who claimed that Latin birthday poetry demonstrated the autonomy of Roman literature from Greek models, affirmed its "national" character, and reflected continuity from polytheism toward monotheism through the cult of the *Genius*. The second section reads Tibullus' *Elegy* 1.7 as a moment of formal experimentation in which the themes and functions of elegy undergo renewal. The final section offers a metapoetic reading of Statius' poem for Lucan, highlighting the

sacrificial ritual represented as the highest poetic honour of his *Silvae*. This leads to considering the *dies natalis* as a strong metapoetical topos, linking celebration of life, commemoration of death, and poetic creation.

PANEL 12: Environment 2: Rome. Chair: *tbc; venue: #tbc

Duncan Keenan-Jones (Manchester): *Limestones in Rome's aqueducts as archives of climate and water management*

Archaeological travertine deposits show great promise as a record of the environmental and climate conditions under which they formed. Dark-coloured layers are present in these travertine deposits on multiple scales down to the micron-scale. Here, we discuss a 55cm-long core procured from the complete travertine deposit of ancient Rome's Anio Novus aqueduct in November 2019. We are using this core to test the hypothesis that aqueduct travertine dark layering is a high-resolution record of rainfall patterns. Advanced fluorescence imaging and lipid biomarker analysis, interpreted using isotopic analyses and Principal Component Analysis, estimate the relative contribution of rainfall runoff and microbial communities by differentiating between different carbon compounds introduced by each, which has been very effective in similar deposits such as stalagmites. If the hypothesis is correct, dark layering in archaeological travertines from river-fed aqueducts would be a proxy of rainfall distribution at a sub-annual (likely even daily) resolution, due to the practically instantaneous response of the upper Aniene river to rainfall events. Stable isotope analyses reveal the impact of the building of a dam on the Aniene River, upstream of the aqueduct intake. Dating has been a recurrent problem with these deposits, but C 14 dating of both carbonate and trapped organics, coupled with dating from Latin texts and isotopic evidence of annual cycles, is underway to resolve this problem.

Mark McCaffery (Exeter): *Liminality of the Vicus Tuscus*

Cicero seizes my interest when he states: "in considering the place where the act was performed, account is taken of what opportunity the place seems to have afforded for its performance" (*de Inv*. I.38). This concept of being able to read and interpret Rome's cityscape was heavily utilised by Vasaly (1993) in her analysis of imagery in the oratory of Cicero, and it has served to inspire my current undertaking of a PhD thesis entitled "Liminal Loci and the Foundation of Rome's Topographical Narrative in the Cityscape". The chapter of this work which I intend to focus my paper upon examines the Signum Vertumni and its location at the head of the Vicus Tuscus. Addressing the question of why the Signum Vertumni occupied the particular locus it did, attention is turned to the course of the pomerium during the republican era, along with the concept of 'Roma Quadrata' as defined by our sources. This discursus endeavours to define the area of the Velabrum between the Palatine and Capitoline as a liminal zone between 'urbs' and 'sacra', essentially a non-place. This in turn provides scope for explaining why, in line with the etymological explanations for the nomenclature of the Vicus Tuscus being settled by a group of Etruscans in the regnal period, the area of the Velabrum would be suitable for a mercantile, foreign settlement. Ultimately, the Signum Vertumni is recognised as a node within the urban landscape, a forerunner of the Augustan compita denoting both the historical narrative of the locus and demarcating a liminal point, exasperated by its additional exclusion from the bounds of the Forum Romanum. The figure of Vertumnus stood as an outsider looking into the urban heart of Rome, encountered by both civis Romanus

and peregrinus alike, occupying a locus celeberrimus, a node where physical and metaphorical paths converged.

Lovisa Brännstedt (Lund University, Sweden): *Signs in the City: Omens and the Topography of Rome*

This paper examines the relationship between omens and the topography of ancient Rome. The city was filled with monuments, buildings, plants, and objects associated with prodigies: temples were consecrated or rebuilt to expiate portents, statues were restored or ritually cleansed in response to omens, and sacred trees or recurring floods of the Tiber were interpreted as signs of divine communications.

This study draws on about 1,050 omens recorded in literary sources across the Roman history. After providing an overview of the nature of these portents, their interpretation, expiation, and effects, the discussion moves on to a spatial analysis of their distribution in the city and its surroundings. Heat mapping and relational topography reveal notable patterns, including a strong correlation between elevation and omen density.

These findings suggest that the Romans perceived divine interactions as closely tied to the city's topography, with elevated spaces serving as focal points of divine communication. By situating omens within their spatial contexts, this paper highlights correlations between landscape and divine signs, hopefully offering a new perspective on how Romans experienced their city as a religious environment, where natural features, monuments, and ritual practice were deeply intertwined.

Panel 13: Ciceronian Constructions. Chair: *tbc; venue: #tbc

Gabriel Evangelou (Ionian University): *Epistolary concord: Cicero's letters as a medium of reconciliation*

Cicero's correspondence illustrates the central role of letters in the practice of reconciliation during the unstable politics of the late Republic. Although technically private, letters were often written with the expectation of circulation. They therefore functioned both as instruments of negotiation and as public statements of renewed friendship. This paper examines four case studies, Appius Claudius, Crassus, Atticus, and Quintus Junior, in order to show how Cicero used letters to manage broken relationships in political and personal contexts.

Three principal functions can be identified. First, letters could initiate reconciliation after conflict. The exchanges with Atticus and with Quintus Junior demonstrate how Cicero employed the written word to appeal for the restoration of trust. Second, letters could consolidate an agreement that had already been reached. The long letter to Crassus illustrates this purpose, since it was not intended to persuade but to confirm their renewed alliance and to preserve it in writing. Third, letters could present reconciliation to a wider audience. The correspondence with Appius Claudius is the clearest example of this practice, since both parties knew that their letters would be copied and shared among political allies. The letter thus became a stage on which Cicero performed his renewed *amicitia* for the benefit of Pompey and others whose approval he required.

By setting these examples side by side, the paper highlights the ways in which the epistolary medium shaped reconciliation itself. Letters allowed Cicero to frame reconciliation in a controlled and rhetorically careful manner. They blurred the boundary between private and public communication, giving the appearance of intimacy while broadcasting a message to wider audiences. The paper argues that

Cicero's correspondence reveals reconciliation not only as a political necessity or a personal act but also as a performance, and the letter as the medium that made such performances possible.

Ben Jerue (Universidad San Jorge): *Fiction and reality in the reception of Cicero: Quintilian on pro Milone*

The popularity of *pro Milone* should not be taken as a foregone conclusion: not only does the speech have a nonconventional structure, but it also notoriously misrepresents the facts of the case (Dyck 1998). Additionally, Cicero, perhaps unnerved by the jeering crowd or intimidated Pompey's soldiers, gave a memorably poor performance and lost the case, a fact openly recognized by commentators from Asconius onwards (Keeline 2021). Nevertheless, the subsequently modified and published version of the speech was widely read and praised during the Empire (Bonner 1977; La Bua 2019; von der Blom 2022; Steel 2022).

Given an emerging scholarly consensus that authors like Quintilian and Asconius sought to "defend" or "vindicate" Cicero (e.g., Bishop 2015; Keeline 2018; Pieper 2023), one can ask why these very authors focused so intently on a speech that, in many ways, draws attention to the orator's shortcomings and failures. While some have suggested that *pro Milone* was simply too good to ignore (Keeline 2018), the present paper examines Quintilian's handling of the speech to propose a different explanation: it is because of—and not in spite of—these attenuating aspects that *pro Milone* became so popular. Specifically, I argue that Cicero's authorized defense of Milo occupied a convenient grey zone between fact and fiction that at once showcased the orator's rhetorical brilliance and yet came short of actually violating beliefs about oratory as a force for good. Indeed, recent scholarship has identified this tension as a central preoccupation of the *Institutio* (Stoner 2022; Loporcaro 2025). Accordingly, the complexities surrounding *pro Milone*'s delivery and publication offered ancient readers and critics fertile ground for reflection and debate. If this is correct, the popularity of the speech can help us nuance our understanding of the early reception of Cicero and move beyond a simplistic pro- and anti-Ciceronian dichotomy.

PANEL 14: Queer 2: Female Agency in the Greek World. Chair: Emma Hawdale (Nottingham); venue: #tbc

Female agency in ancient Greek literature is both ever-present and elusive: constructed by male authors yet continually resisting their control. This panel explores how women's voices, roles, and identities emerge across a wide range of texts, from the Archaic period to the Roman Empire, through themes such as virginity, sex work, and female homosexuality. This panel consists of four papers, each of which approaches ancient Greek texts with a focus on female agency in order to reevaluate the ways in which these texts have previously been understood. The PhD researchers and early career scholars who will present specialise in a wide range of topics, and so, will offer a diverse range of insights informed by their varying specialisms. In addition, the range of texts spotlighted within each paper will offer insight into the presentation of female agency over a vast period from various contexts. Furthermore, the study of female agency can be enriched by a variety of perspectives; thus, while this panel focuses on the portrayal of female agency, each paper will apply different approaches, which together provide a broader dialogue on the subject: namely, through religious, textual, or queer lenses.

The first paper will be presented by Emma Hawdale, who will reevaluate Athena's role and agency within the Hesiodic succession cycle through an examination of Athena's connection to virginity. Subsequently, Dr Davide Massimo will analyse Hellenistic epigram through a multifaceted poetic lens to provide insight into the varying lives and depictions of regular women. Following this, Dr Roberto Di Tuccio will reconceptualise the role of the sex workers by evaluating the performative nature of virginity. Finally, Chloë Choong will examine female agency through Asclepiades' corpus to reevaluate the current scholarly perception of his treatment of female homosexuals.

Together, these papers demonstrate that whilst ancient Greek literature was overwhelmingly male-authored, it nonetheless preserves complex constructions of female agency that reward critical attention. Each contribution reclaims agency as a category that can reshape how we interpret ancient femininity, sexuality, and power. This panel makes two key interventions. First, it combines gendered and queer perspectives in ways that challenge the heteronormativity inherent in much earlier scholarship. Approaching texts through this dual lens highlights aspects of female experience that have been marginalised or overlooked, from divine virginity to homosexual desire. Second, it demonstrates that female agency is not a static quality but a fluid construct, one that emerges in diverse forms across different genres and periods – from Hesiodic epic to Hellenistic epigram and Imperial prose.

By combining both gendered and queer lenses, this panel will draw upon the intersections between Gender studies and Queer studies. Despite the ever-growing presence of Gender and Queer studies within the scholarly tradition, the confutation of heteronormativity and androcentrism is relatively recent. Thus, previous scholarship has often approached these texts with both heteronormative and androcentric expectations, resulting in important features, such as female agency, being sidelined. By centralising the concept of female agency within these analyses, this panel will challenge previous assumptions made about female roles informed by these outdated approaches.

Emma Hawdale (Nottingham): *The benefits of virginity: Athena Parthenos and the power of Zeus*

In the *Theogony*, Hesiod describes the divine succession cycle, a cycle of violence which starts with Ouranos and ends with the birth of Athena. Zeus' actions contribute to the termination of this cycle, in part by swallowing Athena's mother, Metis, which blocks her ability to procreate. In doing so, Zeus manipulates the prophecy given to him by Gaia and Ouranos, as he prevents Metis from giving birth to the son that would overthrow him. Scholarship has often reiterated that Zeus' actions in the *Theogony* play a major part in the conclusion of the succession cycle, and this is not unsubstantiated. Nevertheless, Athena also plays an important role in ending this cycle of violence and in the confirmation of Zeus' power by remaining a *parthenos* ('maiden' or 'virgin'). There has been limited discussion regarding how Athena's status as a *parthenos* might benefit Athena herself, not just Zeus. Most scholarship attribute very little agency to Athena's actions in the Theogony; her status as a *parthenos* is often taken for granted, and the possibility for further tension between father and daughter is rarely considered.

This paper examines the importance of Athena's position as a *parthenos* in confirming Zeus' power and, importantly, what Athena might gain from being a *parthenos*. It asks the extent to which Athena may have some agency in the choice to remain a *parthenos*, or if this is the choice of her father, Zeus. This paper provides a

new angle by which to analyse the birth of Athena and argues that Athena plays a more significant role in the confirmation of her father's power than has previously been recognised.

Davide Massimo (Ghent University): *Girl, Woman, Other: female narratives in Hellenistic dedicatory epigrams*

This paper will draw on the wealth of Hellenistic epigram, and in particular dedicatory epigram – which reflects real or fictitious dedications, mostly to deities – to focus on female narratives. These dedications depict women at various stages of their lives, from their childhood pastimes to their marriage, childbearing and labour, motherhood, up until old age; they display the different 'careers' of women, such as priestesses and hetaerae; and they show a range of motivations behind the act of dedication, whether it be signs of affection, devotion, requests for help, rites of passage. On one hand, these poems offer valuable insights into aspects of everyday life and Greek religion, although their documentary value is not always straightforward given the fictitious (or allegedly so) nature of many of the texts, while at the same time showing unexpected portraits of women. On the other hand, through this poetic form Hellenistic authors enact strategies of female representations which vary significantly, not the least in the case of female authors such as Nossis and Anyte; all of this through well-established forms and devices of Hellenistic aesthetics, most notably the virtuoso shown in the short form of the epigram, sub-genre experimentation, or metapoetic dimensions (such as in the case of the dedication of portraits depicting the dedicant). The selection of texts will therefore show the variety of female depictions in a particularly productive subgenre, which builds on the reality of Greek femininity but re-elaborates it through a multifaceted poetic lens.

Roberto Di Tuccio (Durham): *Virginity Does Not Exist: Performance, Sex, and the Making of the Sex Worker in Lucian*

This paper argues that virginity in the ancient world is not a natural state but a cultural script that acquires meaning only when enacted. My case study is Lucian's *Dialogues of the Hetairai* 6, where the mother Krobyle instructs her daughter Korinna in the art of becoming a sex worker. Korinna's "loss" of παρθενία (virginity) is framed as the decisive moment of transition: she is no longer a girl but becomes a woman. Yet, as performance theory suggests, this transformation is not biological but performative. Drawing on Schechner's concept of "restored behaviour" and Goffman's insights into role-play, I show that virginity functions here as a codified threshold that enables a new professional identity. Krobyle provides her daughter with a repertoire of gestures, words, and bodily techniques–how to laugh, drink, eat, and even make love–that must be learned and rehearsed like lines in a script. Virginity, in this sense, does not exist physiologically; it exists only as a social construct that legitimises a shift from girlhood into an economic role.

Reading *DoH* 6 against comic and elegiac traditions, I further argue that Lucian redefines the figure of the sex worker by rejecting excess and licentiousness in favour of moderation and refinement. Virginity is thus not simply erased but re-written as the hinge that produces a paradoxical type: the sex worker who must resemble a respectable woman. This destabilises the boundary between sexual labour and normative femininity, while exposing the ways in which patriarchal cultures aestheticised sexual thresholds for male consumption.

By interrogating virginity as a regulatory fiction, my paper contributes to ongoing debates in Queer Classics about the social construction of gender and

sexuality. It will also be accessible to students, since it demonstrates how a seemingly "natural" category like virginity is in fact historically constructed and represented.

Chloë Choong (Nottingham): *'Mistress Kypris, abhor these women': an investigation into the 'condemned' female homosexuals of Asclepiades' AP 5.207*

Within Greek lyric poetry, there are various depictions of homosexual women which refrain from condemning, satirising, or sensationalising them. One may then assume that Asclepiades' AP 5.207, which is heavily influenced by Anacreon's 358 PMG, must employ a similar approach. Yet, there is a common misconception that AP 5.207 explicitly condemns female homosexuality, and thus, reflects Asclepiades' own distaste for homosexual women.

This paper examines AP 5.207 and considers whether it is either fair or accurate to conclude that the epigram explicitly condemns ancient female homosexuality; I aim to illustrate that it is not. To support this claim, I explore the distinction between the poet, Asclepiades, and the poet-character, Ego, to demonstrate that they cannot be considered as one and the same. Whilst it may be true that *Ego* finds female homosexuality condemnable, this is not inherently true of Asclepiades, who seeks to mock the character of Ego throughout.

When considering AP 5.207 within the wider corpus in which it appears, the presence of female agency becomes apparent; as Asclepiades mocks Ego, depicting his continual amorous pursuits and their subsequent failures, he simultaneously grants the women autonomy and the agency to reject Ego. By considering the female agency present throughout Asclepiades' corpus, this paper argues that it is misguided to understand AP 5.207 as Asclepiades' personal abhorrence for female homosexuality, just as it is misguided to claim that Asclepiades personally hates *hetairai* or women. Building upon this, I instead argue that it is, in fact, Ego's very condemnation of female homosexuality in AP 5.207 which Asclepiades exploits to mock him. In turn, I demonstrate that it is reductive to the study of ancient female homosexuality to ignore the nuances of AP 5.207 and dismiss it as a source which is strictly condemning of it.

PANEL 15 (Pedagogy Workshop): Learning Latin the Ancient Way Workshop.

Organiser: Eleanor Dickey (Reading); venue: #tbc

This interactive workshop will aim to give participants an experience as close as possible to Latin learning as Greek speakers would have experienced it during the Roman empire. It is suitable for people of all ages, backgrounds and career stages, from those with extensive knowledge of Latin to those with none.

The workshop will begin with an explanation of the evidence for ancient Latin learning by Greek speakers, looking at ancient papyrus fragments, texts surviving via the medieval manuscript tradition (particularly the Colloquia of the Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana and the Latin grammar of Dositheus), and mentions in literature. Participants will then divide themselves into those playing teachers and those playing pupils to experiment with actual ancient Latin exercises. Pupils, working individually or in pairs, will choose a colloquium, literary extract or grammar exercise suited to their Latin level and interests, and prepare it using the same aids that a Greek-speaking student would have used. (Greek will normally be translated into English to give participants an experience equivalent to that of native Greek speakers, but in some exercises Greek will be retained to give participants an experience equivalent to that of native Coptic speakers who learned Latin via Greek.) Once pupils have

completed an exercise, or at least got as far as they can without help, they will present their work to someone taking the teacher role and answer the kinds of questions that ancient students would have been asked.

We will aim to give participants taking the teacher role the skills to teach Latin in a way as close as possible to how Greek-speaking Latin teachers taught. In order to achieve this goal some advance preparation would be useful, so those who want to try the teacher role should contact the organiser as far in advance as possible: E.Dickey@reading.ac.uk.

Because of the practical nature of this workshop, in-person attendance is strongly recommended.

Relevant bibliography:

Dickey, E. 2016a *Learning Latin the Ancient Way*. Cambridge.
Dickey, E. 2016b 'The authorship of the Greek version of Dositheus' grammar and what it tells us about the grammar's original use', in R. Ferri and A. Zago (edd.), *The Latin of the Grammarians* (Brepols) 205–35.
Dickey, E. 2015 'Columnar Translation: an ancient interpretive tool that the Romans gave the Greeks', *Classical Quarterly* 65: 807–21.
Dickey, E. 2012-15 *The Colloquia of the Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana*. Cambridge.
Dickey, E., Ferri, R., Scappaticcio, M.C. 2013 'The origins of grammatical tables: a reconsideration of P.Louvre inv. E 7332', *ZPE* 187: 173–89.
Scappaticcio, M.C., Dickey, E., Colella, L. 2025 *Corpus of Latin Texts on Papyrus*. Cambridge.

PANEL 16: Imperial Propaganda ancient and modern. Chair: Tim Cornell; venue: #tbc

Dina Damnjanovic (Belgrade): *Heroic Genealogies. An Aspect of Nobilitas on the Coinage of Octavian and Antony, 42 BCE*

This paper examines the iconographic representations on two series of gold coins minted in Rome in 42 BCE by the triumvirs Octavian and Antony, whose reverse types feature Aeneas and Hercules. The study analyses the propagandistic function of these coin types within the broader historical and ideological context of the civil war against the republican forces led by Brutus and Cassius, as well as its aftermath. The republican leaders promoted traditional values and presented themselves as *liberatores* of Rome, emphasising their *nobilitas*, often through descent from figures associated with the foundation of the Republic. Octavian and Antony, instead sought to construct their *nobilitas* through divine lineage, in line with an already well-established practice among the Roman elite. The obverses of both types assert their authority through portraiture and titulature. Octavian's Aeneas type evokes *pietas*, filial devotion, and connection to Julius Caesar, reinforcing the Julian claim to divine ancestry and foreshadowing Octavian's later self-presentation as the restorer of Rome. Antony's Hercules type emphasises military strength, his position in the Roman East, and associations with Alexander. Both series therefore served as propaganda, highlighting divine ancestry and *nobilitas* in a period shaped not only by military conflict but also by fierce ideological competition.

Karine Laporte (Université Laval): *Notes from the Villa: Hadrian as Imperial Author and Writing Emperor*

Looking at the abundant scholarship on the emperor Hadrian from recent decades, it quickly becomes clear that his literary production remains tied to his image of

Graeculus and has not fully been integrated to his imperial persona. Admittedly, most of Hadrian's writings have been lost: while certain pieces, like official speeches and letters, but also poems, have been preserved in inscriptions or by ancient historians (mostly later, like Cassius Dio and *SHA*), the rest is at best fragmentary and quite a few are hypothetical. Using these attributions, real or imagined, instead of trying to work around them, I revisit Hadrian's authorship as part of his imperial identity, political programme and conception of emperorship. By looking at ancient literary portrayals over against official representations, I argue that the entirety of his œuvre must be taken into account, not just official or historical pieces. I also engage with modern (dis)attributions, namely the *Fragments of the Roman Historians* (Cornell *et al.* 2013), in determining how Hadrian's image and legacy might be mediated through other types of evidence. More broadly, I analyze the implications of an important public figure such as the Roman emperor who puts out literary works that go well beyond their official capacity. Certainly, authors, even those who also happen to be emperors, always write and evolve within a society and its tradition. But specific dynamics between centralized power and ambient culture must also be acknowledged and examined in the production of art during the imperial period, perhaps especially under the Antonines. Finally, through the notion of parasocial relationships as studied in modern mass-media society, I investigate the proximity to the emperor, both suggested and simulated, by the circulation and availability of his literary production.

Alex O'Neill (Trinity, Dublin): *Barbarians and Trojan Horses: Islam and classical antiquity in the French fascist imagination*

In 2012, French fascist and conspiracy theorist Renaud Camus described the modern French city as 'a sort of Troy where the wooden horses would be in every square'.1 Over one hundred years earlier, antisemite Édouard Drumont characterised all of human history as an endless conflict between Aryans and Semites—for Drumont, not only Jews, but also Arabs and Muslims. This struggle began, according to Drumont, with the Trojan War, Troy having been 'an entirely Semitic city'.

The idea of Islam as an essentially and unassimilably foreign element in Europe, one not only at odds with but fundamentally destructive to a European culture and identity rooted in classical antiquity, has become more and more widespread across the continent since at least the early 2000s. The figure of the immigrant, the Muslim, and the terrorist have been collapsed together in order to present all immigrants into Europe as existential Islamic threats counter-colonising the continent, a rhetorical strategy pioneered in France by Jean-Marie Le Pen and the Front National (now Rassemblement National) in the 1970s and 80s.

This paper traces the history of the development of this discourse in France, from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century to the shifts which took place after the Algerian War of Independence and ending with the Great Replacement conspiracy theory and its impact beyond France itself. It examines the uses to which Greek ideas about 'barbarians' and the Trojan War are and have been put by French fascists in constructing Islam as antithetical to French culture, imagined as the truest inheritor of Greek antiquity. Finally, it considers how we as classicists might read Greek barbarians against the grain of the imagined history of the eternal struggle between East and West.

Jo Ball (Manchester Metropolitan): *Which Side Are We On? Approaching Provincial Resistance and Rebellion in the Roman World from a C21st Perspective*

During Rome's expansion into and occupation of large areas of Europe, the Near East, and north Africa, it repeatedly encountered violent resistance from indigenous groups. The figures who led resistance or rebellion against Rome are frequently regarded in their equivalent countries today as freedom fighters and liberators, a process which has been present in most cases since the C19th. Figures such as Viriathus, Vercingetorix, Arminius, and Boudica (to name just a few) are celebrated in art, music, and literature, and are frequently commemorated with statues and other public monuments. Such resistance figures are especially relevant in a post-colonial world, where Rome represents the ultimate Imperialist force.

The willingness of Rome's provincial subjects to stand up to their oppressors, usually at the cost of their own lives, draws modern sympathies and may create a bias, conscious or otherwise, in our interpretation of ancient resistance. There is often little discussion of the human cost of ancient decisions to resist or rebel against Rome, nor much moral critique of their actions in doing so. However, some of the actions undertaken by rebels – admittedly, as recorded in Roman historical sources – would today constitute terrorism or war crimes comparable in severity, if not scale, to those committed by Rome. How do our modern sympathies impact our reception of military atrocities in the Roman world – and those who committed them?

This paper explores some of the issues that we should consider when approaching provincial resistance and rebellion in the Roman world in a post-colonial context, including questions of morality, sympathy, and inherent bias. It also considers how far we can impose judgement on such events, and how far nationalist interpretations of antiquity have impacted the academic reception of rebel leaders.

PANEL 17: Women's Networks in the Ancient World. Organisers: Claire Holleran (Exeter) and April Pudsey (Manchester Metropolitan); venue: #tbc

Research into the lives and concerns of women in the early Roman world has flourished over the past few decades, and covered aspects of life ranging from religious activity and prominence to economic significance, female visibility and, most prominently, roles within family life. Yet there have been relatively few studies of the ways in which women navigated, and shaped, their social and economic positions and individual status in relation to one another, beyond their roles alongside the men in their lives (as mothers, daughters, wives, sisters etc.), and these are often limited in scope and source material.

This panel features four papers that collectively ask how women navigated and constructed their social position with other women, and with men, both of similar social standing and those of different socio-economic positions. It will explore evidence of women's networks as a form of relationships that permitted women opportunity to act collectively in furthering their shared economic, political, and affective interests, in a patriarchal society. What types of support strategies did women employ in relation to one another? Were these interests ideological, emotional, or purely pragmatic? And what impact did they have? What sort of language was employed to acknowledge these bonds? And what, if any, was the public recognition of these strategies? Asking these sorts of questions will help texture our picture of the experiences of women across the social spectrum, in different regions of the classical Mediterranean, and will highlight the sociocultural mechanisms through which women were able to navigate patriarchy.

Fernandez-Prieto examines epigraphic material to explore the roles of grandmothers and older women in the oikos, in relation to their support of the younger women of their families and communities in classical Athens. Ruiz Vivas analyses the hierarchical nature of women's networks as revealed in early Roman literature and inscriptions, uncovering dynamics of cooperation among women of different statuses and positions of power. Holleran will explore the epigraphic evidence for female networks in first and second century CE Italy and consider the role that friendship networks in particular may have played in offering social and economic support to women. Pudsey will focus on the papyrological material from Roman Egypt and inscriptions from Italy and consider the socio-economic and power positions of wet-nurses, both those who nursed for the children of the wealth and influential, and those who nursed foundlings destined for enslavement.

Aida Fernández Prieto (Universidad de Valladolid): *Grandmothers as nodes of (female) networks in the Classical and Hellenistic Greek World*

While mothers and wet nurses have long drawn scholarly attention in the study of Greek family and society, the role played by grandmothers remains largely invisible (or invisibilised), a fact that is undoubtedly related to the complexities posed by Greek kinship terminology and to the scarcity of surviving (epigraphic) sources. This is further compounded by an ambivalent image of elderly women in ancient Greek literature. In genres such as tragedy, older women often appear as figures of care or fragility, whereas in comedy, especially in Aristophanes, female old age often becomes an object of mockery or criticism, reflecting social tensions regarding female authority and vulnerability.

Nevertheless, despite the difficulties mentioned, ancient Greek sources enable us to recognise grandmothers as active agents within the oikos. In this way, this paper seeks to examine both literary representations of grandmothers in the Classical and Hellenistic periods and the surviving epigraphic evidence—predominantly from funerary contexts— which, far from portraying them as marginal figures relegated to a secondary place within the household, highlight their role as central nodes in intergenerational (female) networks, revealing a dimension of women's agency often hidden beneath male-centered narratives. Indeed, an examination of the surviving literary and epigraphic sources reveals how grandmothers played a crucial role in weaving intergenerational networks, as well as in sustaining the *oikos* and caring for its youngest and most vulnerable members, as is evidenced, for example, in Ampharete's funerary monument, (*IG* II² 10650 = *IG* I³ 1290, c. 400–375 BCE), located in the Kerameikos cemetery in Athens.

Carmen María Ruiz-Viva (University of Paris X-Nanterre, France): *Cooperation among Women in Ancient Rome: Unequal Networks and Internal Differences*

This paper explores the hierarchical nature of women's networks by analysing its reflection in ancient written texts and epigraphic evidences. The main aim is to uncover dynamics of cooperation among women of different statuses and power positions. While women have traditionally been defined in relation to men (as wives, sisters, mothers, etc.), this paper approaches to the internal nature of women's networks and their own interpersonal bonds. This presents a novel approach to the study of women and social history in Antiquity. From a gender-theoretical and intersectional approach, this study highlights the internal heterogeneity of women as a social group built up in continuous interpersonal bonds (domestic, civic-community, religious, economical, among other). But women's networks were not necessary

egalitarian. In fact, Roman society was absolutely hierarchical, grounded on multiple links of dependency (moral, symbolical, economical, juridical…etc.). So, regarding women's networks, gender intersects with other multiple variables, resulting in a polyhedric social mosaic with unequal relations of power, prestige and status. Although these differences, sometimes cooperation, and even affection were possible. Specially, when a gender consciousness emerged, that is, the acknowledgement of common situations based on gender divisions, exclusions and limitations.

In order to tackle all these complex variables. This presentation will proceed in two steps: first, it will explore the internal hierarchy among elite women and how these operated for pursuing collective interests and actions, as documented in Cicero's, Livy's, or Plutarch's works; second, it will explore other situations of cooperation among women with different statuses, while not excluding mutual tensions and conflicts as reflection of these differences. Taken together, this analysis reflects on how women's networks combined hierarchy, power divisions, inequality, dependency, but also, collaboration, as both framed by and resulting from a patriarchal context.

Claire Holleran (Exeter): *Female Support Networks in Imperial Italy*

Family was surely the principal network for women in the Roman world. Yet whether through death, divorce, enslavement, or other circumstances, not all women will have had access to family networks; even those who were firmly embedded within such networks may have looked to extend their social ties. For these women, friendship networks may have offered a means of both social and economic support. Certainly, the Vindolanda tablets hint at the networks that existed among women in military communities (e.g. *Tab. Vindol*. II 291-294), and although the women concerned were the wives of relatively high-ranking officers (themselves also friends), we might suppose that poorer women also forged social networks with other women. Laelius in Cicero's *De Amicitia* (46-47) may be disparaging of female friendships, viewing them as incomparable to the *amicitia* between men, but his comments presuppose that both women and the poor forged friendships. Furthermore, in his rejection of the Epicurean notion that friendship was based on need, he acknowledges that friendship networks could provide a form of security. Epigraphic evidence too reveals a world in which both men and women are part of non-kin friendship networks. This paper will explore the epigraphic evidence for such friendship networks in more depth, focusing in particular on women in imperial Italy. It is often assumed that networks and ties of *amicitia* were one of the key ways in which men navigated the urban social and economic landscape. Here we consider the potential social and economic support that friendship networks may also have offered to urban women.

April Pudsey (Manchester Metropolitan): *Milk-Bonds: the Status and Situations of Wet-Nurses, Mothers and Milk-Siblings in the Roman World*

Across the Roman world, breastfeeding by both mothers *and* wet-nurses was ubiquitous. Medical writers were well acquainted with practices around duration of exclusive breast feeding and weaning onto animal milk and foods, and recent archaeological research has elucidated weaning patterns and their impact on infant health (Pearson *et al*. 2010; Dupras *et al*. 2001; Prowse *et al.* 2004; Fuller *et al.* 2006; Bourbou and Garvie-Lok 2009). But the cultural and emotional aspects of breastfeeding, in particular wet-nursing others' infants, are largely absent from scholarship, as is a focus on questions of affective bonds, mutual support strategies, and the socio-economic power situations of women engaged in the practices of

nursing their own and/or others' children. This paper will examine the emotive aspects of nursing in the Roman world, from a perspective of wet-nurses and their nurslings, 'milksiblings', and mothers and nurses – the fictive kinship and emotional bonds which add to growing evidence for *maternitas* as incorporating 'social motherhood' (Hrdy, 1999), the significance of the political state of motherhood, and the social and cultural positions of nurses.

A collection of wet-nursing contracts from Roman Egypt illustrates that wet-nurses were hired to nurse abandoned infants who had been destined for slavery (Masciadri and Montevecchi, 1984). Many of these documents reveal emotions of nursing and family life, for instance nurses were sometimes given the privilege of naming the child. In some legal documents we see dispute around the death of nurslings and provision being made for the emotional impact on those nurses. This paper will consider contracts, letters, and petitions to examine aspects of the nursing relationship in which women employed and/or were impacted by legal and cultural support strategies. It will also consider the perspective of the nursed infant, from epigraphic material across the Roman world detailing adults' emotional bonds with their erstwhile wetnurses. Nurses' emotional investment appears to have been matched by the genuine sentiment from former nurslings, expressed on their funerary commemorations. There is also evidence of strong bonds between collactanei, 'milk-siblings'. The paper will ask how these emotional bonds were understood and nurtured across families and communities, and in particular how women who nursed were able to navigate their position and circumstances in Roman Egypt.

FRIDAY 10 APRIL - SESSION 3: 15.30-17.30

PANEL 18: Philosophical Interactions. Chair: Jenny Bryan (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Astrid Grindeland (Balliol, Oxford): *Contaminated by Poetry: Cultural Entrapment in Lucian's Menippus or The Nekyomanteia*

This paper will examine Lucian's *Menippus or The Nekyomanteia* as a literary parody of the *katabasis* motif. Lucian situates Menippus' underworld journey in Greek mythological and literary tradition but subverts it by staging a *katabasis* that functions not as the archetypal hero's quest, as in Homer, nor as a site of philosophical enlightenment, as in Plato, but rather as a process of literary contamination. He engages most pointedly with Plato's *Republic* and its anxieties about the corruptive power of poetry, with Menippus embodying precisely the kind of impressionable youth whom Plato's censorship seeks to protect. Yet the solution – a *katabasis* to consult Tiresias – results not in moral clarity but in a further entanglement with literature: Menippus returns 'contaminated', speaking only in verse quotations.

What this dramatizes, I argue, is a broader Lucianic theme of 'cultural entrapment'. For Lucian, 'Greek' is not something you are, but something you perform, and many of his texts satirise moments when those performances fail. Yet, like all satirists, Lucian is open to the charge that he is doing precisely what he mocks. This may be why many of his works are obsessed with escaping culture to look back in, reflected in his fondness for narrators who are divine, non-Greek, or able to view the earth from above or below. These are not merely literary devices, but fantasies of escape from cultural entrapment. *Menippus or The Nekyomanteia*, shows that this escape is only a fantasy. The dislocated chronology of Menippus' *katabasis* – where the beginning becomes the end – undermines the idea of a 'before' and 'after' contamination. Lucian shows that for Menippus there is no uncontaminated beginning, just as for a satirist like Lucian there is no Archimedean point from which to judge culture without being implicated.

Matthew Wainwright (Oxford): *Lucretian Thirst and Epicurean Political Philosophy in Lucan's Ilerda Sequence (IV.319-381)*

This paper will explore the use of thirst in Lucan's *Bellum Civile* as an image grounded in ethical and political philosophy. I will examine how Lucan's portrayal of thirst and its 'pathological consequences' (Migliorini, 1997, p.102) evokes Lucretian depictions of thirst and human suffering, which Lucan exploits to comment on the causes of the Civil War. Building on analyses of Lucretius' politics by Fowler (1997) and Schiesaro (2007), I will explore how his use of thirst to forward Epicurean quietist political philosophy is transposed into Lucan's work, which is then connected with Lucretian cataclysmic destruction (Lapidge, 1979) and regeneration to characterise the harmful causes of the War.

My study will focus on the Ilerda sequence, specifically where the republican forces suffer debilitating thirst as a result of Caesar's encirclement (*Luc.*IV.319-329), and their eventual relief by drinking river water (*Luc.*IV.365-381). In these lines, Lucan evokes a tradition of Plague narratives (particularly Lucretius' *Plague of Athens* (*Lucr.*VI.1138ff.), as well as the *Noric Plague* (Verg.*G.*III.478ff.) and the *Plague of Aegina* (Ov.*Met.*VII.501-613)) to present thirst and the corporeal imbalance of water as a disease (Esposito, 2009; Asso, 2010). I will argue that this portrayal is

combined with other depictions of thirst in Lucretius (*e.g. Lucr.*IV.1097-1104; V.945ff.) to provide a platform for his Lucretian stance against luxury (*Luc.*IV.373-381; *cf. Lucr.*II.20ff.), stemming from its role in creating the Civil War (*cf. Lucr.*III.59ff.). Taken in the context of the aftermath of a destructive river-flood which breeds a quasi-*palingenesis* (*Luc.*IV.48ff.), Lucan's Lucretian imagery of thirst appears to reinforce a portrayal of a reassertion of natural desires, one which is corrupted by the protagonists of the Civil War (*i.e.* Caesar). I contend that Lucan here is exploiting Epicurean political philosophy both to characterise the causes of the Civil War as harmful and to reinforce the cosmic scale of the upheaval (*cf.* Loupiac, 1998, p.32) generated by the War.

Laurent J. Cases (National Taiwan University) *Narrating the Late-Roman Bureaucracy: Philosophy, Tragedy, History, and The Fall of Rome*

At the beginning of the sixth century CE, the historian Zosimus critiqued the emperor Constantine for increasing the size of the bureaucracy. The consequence, he said, was an increase in expenditures, and, a progressive relaxation of army discipline. This, he argued, contributed directly to state of affairs in the reign of Anastasius. By the 530's, two treatises had come out, an *Advice to the Emperor* by a deacon named Agapetus, and an anonymous *Treatise on Political Science*. Both advised the emperor to decrease the size of the bureaucracy, the former calling upon God, the latter on Homer, Socrates, and Cicero. A third text articulated a limited, elite-centered bureaucracy, the *de Magistratibus* of John, the son of Laurentius, from Lydia. Lydus (as he is better known) viewed the recent history of the bureaucracy through the lens of Euripides. Indeed, two citations, one from the lost *Peleus*, the other from the *Bacchae*, frame the history of the bureaucracy under Justinian.

The intensity of the debates over imperial overreach in the reign of Justinian drew upon the classical tradition of antiquity. This paper will investigate precisely how authors of Late Antiquity deployed both philosophy and verse to create what would become a coherent discourse on administration. Their critique of the bureaucracy, and the solutions they came up with, I will argue, are not mere receptions of ancient theories of the state, but articulations of new principles grounded in ancient political theories that elevate the bureaucracy to the rank of topic worthy of discussion.

This debate over the shape of the state in the age of Justinian does not just cross time, but also epistemes and religious beliefs. This paper will therefore shed light on the developments of ancient political philosophy of the bureaucracy in the time of Justinian.

PANEL 19: Africa 3: The Other. Chair: Tom Phillips (Manchester); venue: #tbc]

Eleni Bozia (Florida): *Decoloring our intellectual assumptions: Who gets to be rational*

In their seminal works on otherness in an ancient and modern context, respectively, Edward Said and Edith Hall have given their readership valuable insights into the appearance and perception of alterity. Their focus lies on how differences are perceived, but also emphasized and misinterpreted, essentially foregrounding discussions of popular stereotypes. This paper takes a step further and proposes to recontextualize otherness in terms of intellect and its perception. It argues that Africans and other Easterners are presented in classical literature as lacking mental

faculties, a vignette that is then proliferated in modern (colonial) European literature. In both settings, ancient and contemporary, we also hear the counter-voices that reclaim not only their intellect but what intellect is.

Specifically, this paper looks into ancient dramatists, both tragic and comic works, such as Aeschylus, Euripides, and Aristophanes, as well as Heliodorus's *Aethiopica* and Polemo's theoretical weaponization of appearance and intellectual capacity, and argues that the main ideas embedded and proliferated are those that make the other seem less intelligent, hence naturally more prone to subservience. From parodying, as is the case with Aristophanes, to showing fear in Euripides, or condescension in Heliodorus, and lastly to Polemo's phenomenological epistemology, mental powers have been normalized across a Western axis by the Greco-Romans.

Similarly, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* continue against the backdrop of the same skewed intellectual normalization. Conversely, Lucian, Apuleius, and Favorinus construct the antithesis—a different type of normalization that trespasses the imposed Greco-Roman order. Along similar lines, Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka, among others, illustrate and simultaneously combat the colonial marginalization of African intellectual and spiritual traditions, directly comparable to Greek and Roman dismissals of "barbarian" wisdom. All authors confront deeply rooted principles of mental prowess while introducing physical alterity, cultural nuance, and emotional wealth as aspects of intellectual activity rather than proof of the opposite.

In sum, this paper rereads classical works of literature, first situating African authors within the classical canon and subsequently examining not simply otherness but our ability to accept intellectual alterity.

Eve Jeffreys (Edinburgh): *The Perception of Blackness in the Roman World*

The paper will demonstrate the strong negative and occasionally positive associations with blackness in the ancient world, and will show a clear correlation with the Roman understanding of black-skinned individuals. Black people in Rome were variably viewed as off-putting, fascinating, bad luck, weird, and attractive, and they were broadly othered as a result. This othering can be seen in a variety of sources, including household objects, poetry, satire, and mosaics. The material evidence possibly depicting images of real black people, using both black and white marble, is also important to consider. By examining some key case studies, a conclusion will be drawn about how Romans perceived black people, whether the Romans attached any moral value to dark/black skin, and what impact this may have had on actual black Africans living in the Roman world.

Laurie Venters (Tel Aviv University): *Orientalist Stereotypes and Enslaved Labour in Roman Italy*

Research on enslavement in the ancient Mediterranean has expanded significantly in recent decades, challenging long-standing orthodoxies and transforming our understanding of its social and cultural dimensions. Yet while scholarship has made significant advances in reconstructing the practical realities of slavery, less systematic attention has been given to the ideological strategies through which slave owners constructed the enslaved as Other — that is, as fundamentally different from freeborn people. Seeking to address this lacuna, the paper examines how slave owners mobilised orientalist stereotypes to construct an ethnically inflected geography of enslavement, a mental map in which Syrians and Anatolians were flexibly associated

with essentialised physical and mental traits that marked them as suited to particular forms of unfree labour.

PANEL 20 (Pedagogy Workshop): Problem-based learning Workshop: Tackling Global Conflict through Shared Heritage

Organisers: Alex Kemsley (Deputy Head (Academic) & Head of Classics at Orwell Park School); Katharine Russell (Durham; former Head of Classics at Chesterton Community College)

Alex Kemsley is an innovative practitioner who is at the early stages of pursuing doctoral research in the use of PBL in the classroom as a means of widening participation and real-world applicability of the humanities.

Katharine Russell researches how mythology retellings are informing both who and how a young generation of Classicists is shaping the discipline. In her role as Head of Classics at a multi-academy trust, she was committed to including all students in the study of the ancient world.

Abstract

This innovative workshop fuses two of the primary themes of this CA conference: classical heritage and global conflict, and access-centred pedagogy. It offers delegates a chance both to challenge themselves to think about how classical heritage can provoke questions of unity in areas of global unrest, and also to consider how we might sensitively and inclusively teach this to young classicists. Using any tools available to them, including AI, participants will explore the problem: "How can we, as Classicists, seek to solve global conflict?" Then, having (albeit briefly) experienced this style of problem-based learning, participants will have the opportunity to reflect on if and how it might best be utilised by classicists in the classroom.

		Chairs	Participants
Intro (lightening talk)	15 mins	AK and KR – intro to PBL and aims of task	
Select a 'solution'	10 mins	AK and KR chair the selection of a solution for the group to take forwards	Present their ideas and test viability
Research & Design	40 mins	Supervise progress, guide groups to assign roles and prompt questions	
Presentation & Feedback	25 mins (÷ no. of groups)	Listen and 'mark', chair feedback	Present solution Active listening Offer feedback

Group reflection & amendment	15 mins	Add additional leader feedback Prompt reflection	Summarise feedback Write improvement intentions (no time for action)
Conclusion	15 mins	Chair an informal discussion about the experience: focus on other potential applications, access implications, challenges and rewards of PBL in the classroom	Feedback discussion Online feedback survey

Introduction

• A summary of the evidence of project/problem-based learning and its benefits for teaching [the Classics in particular]

• The plan for the session: metacognition; learning about project-based learning through project-based learning.

"How can we, as Classicists, seek to solve global conflict?"

Research & Design

1. Come up with ideas

In small groups, participants clarify:

- What does "solving global conflict" realistically mean for Classicists?
- Are we solving, mitigating, reframing, educating?
- Who is our target audience?
- What would "impact" look like?

Groups produce:

- A 3–4 sentence problem statement
- A clear definition of success

2. Decide on the most viable solution as a group & set about creating a solution

What global conflict does this address?
What assumptions about "shared history" are present?
What perspectives are foregrounded or missing?
Where is the real impact?

How do you avoid reinforcing dominant narratives?

How do you incorporate marginalised voices?
How do you handle contested heritage?

3. Group reflection & amendment

- Participants nominate someone to present their solution
- Present using visual aids ('elevator pitch')
- 10 minutes uninterrupted presentation, 5 minutes questions and feedback from the floor

Conclusion

Move beyond "What did the Romans do?" to "What do we do with Rome now?"

PANEL 21: Environment 3: Literary Environments. Chair: Alison Sharrock (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Charisios Efstratiou (Democritus University of Thrace): *Οἶνος, Σῖτος, Ἰχθύες καὶ Σῦκα- An Ecological Banquet across Aristophanes' Plays*

Without exception, every Aristophanic comedy resonates with an ecological undercurrent, containing direct references to the natural environment, the distinctive features of the Attic ecosystem, and the region's manifold productive resources, whether these emerge as fleeting allusions or as more central motifs of the comic imagination.

This paper aims to explore the presence of ecological and recourse-based imagery, arguing that the comic stage consistently presents a form of an Ecological Banquet. Numerous references throughout the eleven extant comedies along with other staples of the Attic ecosystem function as structuring metaphors that bind together domestic economy, civic politics and religious ritual. The paper proceeds by mapping recurring clusters of environmental imagery across the corpus: the fecund vines and fertile ploughlands that dominate *Peace*; the fish markets and culinary abundance that saturate *Knights* and *Acharnians*; the household economies of oil, salt, and grain in *Lysistrata* and *Ecclesiazusae*; the utopian reconfiguration of the natural world in *Birds* and *Wealth*. Accordingly, attention is given to animal imagery, bees, wasps, frogs, birds, beetles, which reflects and parodies the independence of human and non-human life.

By tracing these motifs, the paper demonstrates that Aristophanic comedy may be read as a sustained reflection on resource management, ecological vulnerability, and the cultural meanings of sustenance. The laughter of the comic stage is thus intertwined with the anxieties and hopes of a society acutely aware of its reliance on agriculture, trade, and the rhythms of the natural world. Ultimately, the comedies reveal an Athens where food, land, animals, and weather are never mere background, but active participants in the comic negotiation of civic identity.

Ioanna Papadopoulou (University of the Peloponnese): *Aeschylean Perspectives on Landscape and Environment: "A-choric" or "En-choric" Works?*

In the surviving plays of Aeschylus, one may discern two different tendencies regarding the representation of space and environment. At times, the references are vague, general, and indeterminate; at others, there is a precise and close interrelation between the dramatic action (or myth/plot) and a specific natural environment, location, or scenographic setting. This paper sets out to investigate the function of environmental imagery and landscape references in Aeschylean dramaturgy, asking

whether the tragedian merely employs them as neutral scenic markers or whether they serve a more complex poetic and dramaturgical function. Two guiding questions frame the analysis: (a) In what ways, and for what purposes, does Aeschylus introduce references to natural settings, landscapes, and localities? More specifically, can we detect a particular or even "hidden" use of environmental references that transcends the immediate dramatic space? and (b) To what extent can it be argued that, in Aeschylus, the natural environment influences not only the progress of the plot but also the ethos, identity, and choices of the characters?

The paper will be developed in two main parts. First, selected passages from Aeschylus' extant plays will be examined in order to highlight either the significance or the relative irrelevance of environmental and locational references for the unfolding of the plot. Such examples will illustrate how the landscape functions either as a dramatic catalyst or as a seemingly indifferent backdrop. Second, these observations will be situated within the broader theatrical dimension of *opsis* and interpreted as part of a possible—and technically meticulous—poetic strategy consciously employed by Aeschylus.

By foregrounding the interplay of place, nature, and drama, the paper aims to reconsider the role of environment in Aeschylean tragedy and to suggest that his works may be read as simultaneously "a-choric" and "en-choric": oscillating between abstract universality and concrete environmental embeddedness.

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Grace MacDonald (Oxford): *The Cosmological Environment in Manilius' Astronomica*

The paper will discuss the relationship between the cosmological environment and the human sphere as presented in Manilius' *Astronomica*. According to Manilius, this relationship determines one's potential to understand astrological knowledge, and explaining the intricacies of this relationship is a recurrent, key component to the poet's didactic programme. By untangling how the universe influences human life and knowledge, I hope to foster discussion on the cosmological environment's place within the Roman world.

Throughout the *Astronomica*, Manilius describes various places in the human body that can process astrological knowledge. These same places are likewise applied to the cosmos. We might be able to understand the universe in our heart, chest, and mind (*praecordia*, *pectus*, *mens*) by observing and engaging with the heart, chest, and mind of said universe. Throughout the poem, certain bodily vocabulary describes both human and astrological entities, reflecting one another. The parallel, cognitive constructions seem to facilitate the transfer of knowledge between people and the celestial – a transfer Manilius has tasked himself with expounding. However, Manilius warns readers that such knowledge might ultimately not be accessible for them. Should they not be part of the *minima turba* (an ambiguous subset of people supposedly privy to the universe's innerworkings), some, if not all, cosmological knowledge is consequently beyond reach.

The personified cosmos of Manilius' *Astronomica* reflects a system attuned with humanity, but Manilius' discussions about access to the cosmos muddy what this reflective relationship means. Does the synchronisation between humanity and the cosmos facilitate the sharing and acquisition of knowledge? If not, what view towards the universe is Manilius fostering for his Roman audience? This paper will explore these questions, considering how the extraterrestrial environment was envisaged in the ancient world.

PANEL 22:Queer 3. Re-writing Classical Queerness. Chair: Tim Kenny (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Charlie Parker (Reading): *Beyond the Margins: Queer Philology and Expurgated Classics*

This paper presents the initial findings from a work-in-progress PhD project: applying queer philology, a lens that treats the linguistic and corporeal as inextricable, to examine the expurgation (the removal of 'objectionable' material: OED s.v. 'expurgation (n.)') in translations, editions, and commentaries of Roman satire. The project argues that expurgation historically functioned as a powerful mechanism to marginalise non-normative narratives and identities, thereby actively excluding certain voices and perspectives from engaging in and being reflected within the canon of classical literature and institutions.

This paper focuses on the abundant 'libidinal rhetoric' (Gunderson 2005) and prevalent themes of emasculation in Roman satires to explore how justifications for expurgation reflect shifting moral anxieties around obscenity, purity, and masculine identity across different historical periods. By analysing case studies of early expurgated editions of Juvenal, chosen both for his significant engagement with sexual and gendered themes and for the comparative lack of attention versus his satirical peers, the research demonstrates how these practices reinforced dominant power structures and limited non-normative readings. The paper scrutinises the discourse of editorial prefaces and commentaries, as well as the main text, to analyse specific textual tactics that sanitised or pathologised content, such as euphemism, elision, or selective translation. This approach reveals evolving cultural sensitivities to Roman satire, exemplified by how the os impurum motif in Martial, for instance, invoked distinct anxieties in Roman versus Victorian contexts (Brennan-McMahon 2017).

By shedding light on these historical processes and their profound impact on classical reception, this paper offers necessary insights into modern literary censorship debates shaped by discourses that marginalise modern conceptions of queerness and otherness. It highlights expurgation's persistent role in shaping societal perceptions of marginalised groups, controlling narratives, and demonstrates the essential importance of queer philologies as a form of intellectual resistance to challenge exclusionary legacies within the humanities.

Anactoria Clarke (OU), *Queering the Bacchae: Dionysus, Teiresias and the Sacred Band in Natasha Pulley's The Hymn to Dionysus*

Euripides' *Bacchae* presents characters who challenge binary notions of gender; both Dionysus and Pentheus are portrayed in ways that reject firm notions of masculine presentation, and in their stichomythia, there is frequently an undercurrent of attraction and desire. Natasha Pulley's 2025 novel *The Hymn to Dionysus* further explores these notions of gender portrayal, offering up a queer plot that builds upon the slipperiness of Euripidean characterisation as well as utilising historical information on the Theban Sacred Band. Whilst Pulley's novel employs poetic licence to weave these factors into her storyline, including borrowing aspects of society that classicists would more firmly recognise as Spartan, the focus upon same-sex relationships and desire underpins the entire plot.

This paper will explore how the ancient texts used by Pulley, Euripides' *Bacchae*, Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, and the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus* establish the portrayal of the characters she they utilises, and then move to the modern reception

text to analyse how the author has further employed historical groups and social mores to strongly underpin her plotline. It will detail how the ancient Greek language and texts have given a foundation to a reception of Theban mythology and a more explicit expression of ancient sexuality.

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Orla Davey (St Andrews): *Fantastical Futures: Transforming Critical Literacy and Classical Myth in YA Fantasy*

This paper analyses Young Adult Fantasy novels that create futuristic teenage descendants of ancient mythic figures, who assert queer identities and challenge traditional ways of teaching Greco-Roman myth through the process of critical literacy, as developed by Ira Shor in 1999, by reestablishing their own curriculums of Classical myth that affirm their queer identities and challenge active denial of these identities. In Kalynn Bayron's *This Poison Heart* duology (2021-2022), Briseis and her adoptive mothers discover that she and her birth family are descendants of Medea who have inherited her poisonous powers, challenging ancient narratives that Medea murdered her own children. In Sarah Underwood's *Lies We Sing to the Sea* (2023), a curse placed on Ithaca requires twelve girls to be sacrificed every year in retribution for the twelve maids hanged in the events of *The Odyssey* centuries earlier. One of the maids, Melantho, resurrects as a fantastical sea creature and infiltrates the Prince of Ithaca's palace to uncover the truth about his family curse within an ancient library. Bayron and Underwood's characters engage in critical literacy to challenge how their histories have been represented. In doing so, they highlight a shift in YA mythic texts regarding how collaborations between students and educators are promoted. I contend that the imagined afterlives of ancient mythic families in YA Fantasy not only encourage young adults to learn about Classical myth, but also encourage them to critically reassess how these myths are portrayed and challenge misrepresentations that negatively affect their own identity formation.

Louisa Buck (Brighton) and Veena Holkar (Independent Researcher): *Queering the Patriarchy: challenging a normative misogynistic power structure through the figure of Clytemnestra*

A Braided River is a collaborative experiment with form. It is a collection of illustrated short fiction stories, tightly interwoven, with recurring characters, events, phrases and imagery, and with elements of mythology and folk tale threaded through. The book may also be read as one single story, told in different ways, from different locations and perspectives, and with an overarching theme - the abuse of power, and how it may be recognised, resisted and sometimes even overcome.

This research forefronts Clytemnestra, previously seen as a peripheral character and subordinate, shoring up the patriarchal myth of the male hero. In our collaboration she becomes a dynamic figure who subverts the original narrative and leads it in a radically new direction.

Four ways to tell a story:

1. A fresh take on the original myth, drawing on magic, fairytale, and rhyme to empower Clytemnestra.
2. A fragmented stream of consciousness - the original myth dreamed from a subversive female perspective.
3. A set of short contemporary stories highlighting the persistence of the structures of patriarchy.

4. Images threaded through the book accessibly narrating the story in of themselves. They also amplify the meanings embedded in the text, and link the three written formats through metaphor and repetition.

PANEL 23: The Ancient Letter Collections Project (2016-2024) and the study of ancient epistolography: results, significance, impact, future. Chair: Ruth Morello (Manchester); venue: tbc

The AHRC-funded Ancient Letter Collections Project began at The University of Manchester in 2016 (Classics in North West England); the funded phase of the project ended in 2024, but the final outputs, data and results are being made available in 2026. This panel surveys some of the most significant outcomes of the project, which collects key data on the 49 letter collections surviving from antiquity in Greek and Latin up to AD 400. These collections contain letters by or attributed to some of the most famous figures from classical antiquity, including Cicero, Pliny, Seneca, Plato, Themistocles and Socrates, as well as foundational Christian letters such those in the New Testament and those of Ambrose, Augustine and Basil. The corpus is huge: over 2.2 million words in over 6,500 letters; to give some sense of scale, this total of words is around half the size of the entire pre-AD 100 corpus of classical Latin. The senders and addressees are found across the ancient Mediterranean, from north Africa and Egypt to Antioch and Jerusalem; for example, one prominent collection (that of Synesius) tells of the struggles of a north African bishop to navigate personal and political tribulations in Cyrenaica in Libya (Africa and the Classical World).

The ALC project examines not only the orders and arrangements of these letter collections as found in the manuscripts, but also the size and extent of each collection, the character and nature of its senders and addressees, its publication and editorial history, and the type and character of the collection itself, in order to establish how each collection was ordered and read from antiquity onwards. The project brings together letters Greek and Roman, pagan and Christian, authentic and pseudepigraphic, verse and prose alongside a dizzying range of addressees, from some of the most famous individuals from antiquity, including various Roman emperors, to anonymous Christians of the fourth century, across the ancient Mediterranean. In the letters all human life is present – death, grief, joy, despair and a wealth of perspectives and reflections on human experience of different kinds, encompassing elite perspectives but also those of more marginalised groups (women, non-Greeks/non-Romans, the poor, the enslaved). Many of the letters are immediately intelligible and understandable to modern audiences in a manner rarely found with other types of ancient evidence, with significant potential for education and engagement (see: https://www.gla.ac.uk/schools/humanities/research/classicsresearch/ancientletters/). The project will enable access to this material in unprecedented ways likely to have very significant consequences across the study of classical antiquity. This panel examines some of most important results to emerge from the project and explores their significance, wider impact and possible directions for future research.

The panel is structured into **three papers** surveying different aspects of the ALC corpus, followed by a **panel discussion** focused on assessing the project's potential legacy, future directions in the study of ancient epistolography and the ways in which the project can impact wider audiences and constituencies, including in schools and the general public. We begin with a broad survey of patterns across Greek and Latin letter collections (Gibson), before examining the key figures of senders and addressees in the collections (Morrison), and the principles of arrangement and

organisation which can be observed across the corpus (Abad Del Vecchio). We envisage the three papers each taking up 20 mins plus 10 mins of questions, before the closing panel discussion of c. 25 mins, within an overall two-hour slot.

Roy Gibson (Durham): *The ALC Corpus: Chronology, Development, Greece vs Rome*

The ALC corpus consists of 49 letter collections extant between 400 BCE and 400 CE: thirty-one Greek and eighteen Latin collections, comprising c. 6,500 letters and over 2.2 million words. Latin literature is famously dependent on Greek literature and, in terms of content and style, Latin epistles are not greatly different from Greek counterparts. But in other respects, the two epistolographical traditions are divergent. Greeks never developed a taste for *collections* of letters in verse, and Romans never developed a sustained taste for *collections* of pseudepigraphic letters. The emergence of epistolary verse in the guise of the Augustan poetry book proved decisive for Roman divergence. The poetry book's ethic of symmetry, variety and non-linear narration proved influential on Latin epistolographers from Horace to Ambrose. The Hellenistic poetry book had no corresponding influence on the Greek tradition - where the book unit is largely absent, and the manuscript traditions of individual epistolographers correspondingly more variable. The two traditions converge only in late antiquity – at a time of generally growing cultural divergence. The majority of surviving Greek letter collections prior to late antiquity are pseudepigraphic (including most of the letters in the New Testament): it is only in the 4th century that extant Greek letters converge with Latin counterparts in producing collections filled with authentic letters. Key differences remain: e.g. late antique Greek letters remain generally shorter than their massively extended Latin counterparts; the NT tradition of lengthy doctrinal letters had more influence on the western than eastern Mediterranean. Conversely, in late antiquity, Latin collections become more like Greek collections in terms of geographical spread of addressees: from earliest times, Greek letter collections address correspondents across the Greek world; but, the scattering effects of civil war in Cicero aside, addressees in Latin collections are not spread across the Mediterranean until late antiquity.

Andrew Morrison Ruiz (Glasgow): *Senders, Addressees, Dialogue across Greek and Latin Letter Collections*

A letter sent between sender and addressee closes the gap necessitating the letter, often prompting a response (e.g. asking for news). At the level of the letter collection, however, there are striking differences between the roles played by sender and addressee. Relatively few collections, for example, explore the possibility of dialogue between correspondents: only sixteen ALC collections offer exchanges of letter between correspondents, of which the majority are fictional or arranged by someone other than the author; authorially arranged collections are much less likely to include replies.

One key organising principle across the ALC corpus is clearly the author/purported author of a collection: twenty-one collections have only one sender, including the largest collection in terms of numbers of letters, Libanius; twelve more have only two or three senders. Nevertheless, there are also thirteen 'multi-focal' collections, where fewer than 60% of the letters are sent by the main sender, dominated by fictional or pseudepigraphic collections (e.g. Seneca & Paul, Hippocrates, Pythagoreans, Brutus, New Testament: Catholic, Socrates & The Socratics, Aelian). Arrangement by addressee is another widespread organisational

principle: at least twenty-eight show a degree of arrangement by addressee in at least one of the major ms arrangements.

This paper explores the different patterns in the use of senders and addressees across Greek and Latin letter collections, including the different categories of sender and addressee (including more marginalised groups such as women, the poor/enslaved, non-Romans/non-Greeks), the varying numbers of senders/addressees across the corpus, including the different proportions of letters to one-off addressees or frequent correspondents, the different roles senders/addressees play in the structuring of letter collections, and the different degrees to which collections allow for dialogue between correspondents. The patterns uncovered will demonstrate how fundamental the figures of sender and addressee are to the structure and nature of letter collections.

Julene Abad Del Vecchio (Manchester), *From manuscript to print: journeys in the arrangement, transmission, and publication of (some) ancient letter collections*

In this paper, I present a wide-ranging survey of a key aspect of the ALC Project's research: the principles governing the arrangement of ancient letter collections in both the manuscript tradition and early printed editions. I begin with a brief survey of the organisational structures of some of the collections, whether shaped by the author's own hand, displaying early editorial influence, or left without deliberate arrangement, as well as with a review of the collections' orderings in the manuscript tradition (despite stability, twelve collections out of forty-nine in fact feature three or more major variant orderings). Secondly, I turn to illustrating in more depth the main principles underlying the orders in which the collections are transmitted (e.g., by addressee, sender, or other narrative and/or thematic considerations), considering also those collections with a more complex manuscript tradition, those without a stable ordering in the manuscript tradition (e.g., Cyprian, Jerome, Augustine), and those with no well-defined principles of arrangement. In some cases, chronological or thematic sequences can still be discerned in sub-collections of the large corpora abovementioned. The final part of the paper reviews the early and modern printed editions of Latin and Greek collections, concentrating on the interpretative intricacies that arise from editorial re-ordering of letters: these re-orderings, some successful and some less so, can represent significant departures reflecting deliberate and radical editorial interventions.

Harnessing the privileged vantage point afforded by the materials catalogued and studied by the ALC Project, then, this paper offers a panoramic investigation into the structuring, transmission, and publication of select ancient epistolary corpora, to underscore the project's visibility of ancient reading practices, and its impact on future readers so that they might engage with this evolving material in unprecedented ways.

Closing Panel Discussion/Round Table: legacy, impact, future directions. Chair: Ruth Morello (Manchester),

We propose to close the panel by briefly introducing the project's impact activities with schools and heritage institutions (see the weblink given in the introduction above), before opening up discussion to attendees to discuss the wider impact potential of the project as well as its ongoing legacy and possible future directions which it opens up in the study of ancient epistolography, but also the wider field of the study of classical antiquity, since very many sub-disciplines could benefit from more careful consideration of epistolary texts and evidence and the ways in which

ancient letters and letter collections were read and used across classical antiquity. We are keen to hear from attendees about how they might make use of the ALC project's findings as well as its impact resources to the benefit of both scholarship on ancient letters and a range of different audiences (including in particular schools).

PANEL 24: Commemoration 3: Remembering the Dead (and others) in Literature. Chair: Manos Tsakiris (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Camilla Norcia (Université catholique de Louvain): *Echoes of Chiron: Commemorating Death and Preserving Memory in Pindar's Pythian III*

Among the mythical figures that animate Pindar's Epinician odes, Chiron occupies a uniquely distinguished position.

Featured in no fewer than seven odes, the Centaur is renowned for the gentle care he provided to the young heroes entrusted to him, offering an education that enabled them to embody the divine ideals celebrated in the Epic Cycles.

Particularly noteworthy is Chiron's role in Pythian III, composed by Pindar to console his patron Hieron of Syracuse, during a period of grave illness. Departing from the celebratory tone typical of the genre, the ode is imbued with intimacy and urgency, serving as both a prayer and a private message. Within it, Chiron emerges not merely as a remote mythic figure but as a voice of consolation and continuity, whose cosmic transformation through catasterism offers a paradigm of serenity in the face of death.

Given Chiron's portrayal in the ode, how does his eminent stature allow Pindar to navigate the tension between heroic ideals and human vulnerability?

This paper investigates how Pindar reconfigures Chiron's pedagogical role into a narrative strategy aimed at securing Hieron's remembrance. The ode's deployment of mythic exemplum and gnomic reflection reveals a deliberate attempt to reconcile the impermanence of human life with the permanence of poetic commemoration.

Through careful textual and philological analysis, the intervention seeks to show how, by invoking Chiron as guarantor of wisdom and survival in the poetic imaginary, Pindar confers κλέος ἄφθιτον — the heroic imperishable glory — upon Hieron.

In this way, the Centaur mediates the difficult balance between historical fragility and poetic immortality, transforming the suffering of a mortal ruler into a lasting monument of cultural memory.

Cecilia Burattin (Bristol): *Blood and Pollution: Staging the Memory of the Dead in the Eumenides*

This paper aims at investigating the persistence of the dead on the tragic stage as it is embodied by Orestes' pollution in the *Eumenides*, and how it influences the performance.

In the sequence of death in the *Oresteia*, blood stains first Agamemnon's hands, then Clytemnestra's, and lastly Orestes' (Worman 2018). With each death, *miasma* (pollution) renews itself in the house, as blood clings to the hands of the murderer (Meinel 2015).

In this paper I argue that, in the *Eumenides*, Clytemnestra's performance on stage persists after her death in the spatial structure determined by the pollution originating from her murder and visualised in Orestes' hands stained with her blood. In Greek thought, pollution informed religious and civic legislations. Women in labour, corpses, and murderers were all considered tainted and tainting, dangerous for the community, and in need of careful handling (Parker 1983). Since *miasma* put restrictions around the homicide to avoid the spreading of its contagious danger beyond his body, pollution, transferred from the polis to the theatre – as theatrical

proxemics builds on proxemics outside the stage (Aston and Savona 1991) –, becomes important for thinking about spatial and social dynamics.

With a reversal of point of view, here I am not interested in how the living commemorate the dead, but how the dead force their memory onto the living. In tragedy, pollution acts as a reminder, for the audience and the characters, of the presence of the dead by determining the spatial configuration on stage.

Through the analysis of targeted lines of Aeschylus' *Eumenides*, I intend to highlight how pollution that emerges from violent deaths structures the dramatic space, focusing on the restriction imposed by pollution around Orestes' body.

Philippos Karaferias (University of Grenoble Alpes): *Necropolitics and Sacred Authority in Oedipus at Colonus*

This paper examines Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* through the lens of Necropolitics, exploring how the play dramatizes death not as a tragic endpoint but as a political and sacred resource. At the heart of the drama lies a paradox: Oedipus, once reviled as a polluted exile, ends his life as a revered figure whose death site becomes the cornerstone of Athenian protection and identity. Drawing on Achille Mbembe's framework of Necropolitics—the sovereign power to determine who may die and how their death is deployed—I argue that Sophocles presents Oedipus' body and memory as politically strategic tools. His death is carefully staged: invisible, voluntary, and ritually authorized, conferring divine favor on Athens while denying Thebes control over his remains. In this way, *Oedipus at Colonus* aligns directly with the conference's theme of commemorating the dead by showing how the management of elite death becomes central to civic power, territorial claim, and cultural legacy. Oedipus' transformation from polluted pariah to cultic guardian reflects an Athenian interest in memorializing the outsider as a source of moral capital. Rather than lamenting the past, the play ritualizes it, integrating the dying king into Athens' mythic future. His unmarked tomb, kept secret even from his daughters, emphasizes not his personal grief but the political potential of a controlled memory. In presenting a figure whose death empowers a city while denying closure to others, the play interrogates who is granted a commemorative voice and how death can be weaponized for political ends. *Oedipus at Colonus* ultimately offers a powerful reflection on how ancient tragedy not only mourns the dead but also reclaims them, crafting posthumous authority out of loss and staging memory itself as an act of civic imagination.

PANEL 25: Words for the Ears, Words for the Eyes: Visual Poetry and Bureaucratic Prose in the Late Imperial Court. Chair: Lea Niccolai (Cambridge); venue: #tbc

This panel seeks to explore the boundaries of Roman 'state rhetoric' by investigating the relationship between two sharply contrasting late antique genres that arose at the same time, in the same place, and were produced by much the same group of personnel. By 'words for the eyes', we refer to the overengineered, finely wrought, sometimes impossibly complicated poetic productions of authors like Optatian, Ausonius and Fortunatus, court poets who also held high political office. These poetic productions – notably puzzle poems, bilingual and polymetric compositions – exemplify what Michael Roberts influentially called 'the late antique jeweled style' in a seminal 1989 study of Latin poetics and artistic expression. By contrast, 'words for the ears' gestures to the increasing mass of bureaucratic, prose productions of the

court, in the form of edicts, rescripts, speeches, reports and letters, all of which were understood to be transcribed versions of real, spontaneous speech.

Using literature to investigate social history and vice versa, this panel asks how these two textual styles are to be reconciled. How did authors who wrote in both modes manage their oppositional pulls? Did 'words for the eyes', poems which demanded intensive engagement from their readers, constitute a counterculture to a spontaneous style of textual production which might capture verbal infelicities, momentary breakdowns of logic, and other imperfections of oral delivery? How did the bureaucratic culture of the late imperial court inform its most elaborate poetic productions, and could the style and substance of baroque poetry influence late Roman law-making and governance?

Three papers, spanning the fourth and early fifth centuries, investigate these questions, each from the vantage point of a different confrontation between 'words for the ears' and 'words for the eyes', before the themes are brought together by a closing response from Professor Kate Cooper. The first paper, Ella Kirsh's 'Puzzle as propaganda: Optatian in the lawcourts', reads Optatian's poems alongside legislation which was issued from the imperial court during Constantine I's rule, and considers the form of the puzzle poem, which demands prolonged engagement from the reader, as a vehicle for political and cultural messaging more broadly. Next, Alison John examines the linguistic puzzles crafted by the poet and politician Ausonius in her paper 'Ausonius' linguistic puzzles: poetry and political culture at the court of Valentinian I.' Focusing on Ausonius' bilingual wordplay, much of which requires close visual engagement on the part of his readers and audience, this paper will explore the relationships between classical learning, linguistic knowledge and late Roman political culture at the end of the fourth century. The final paper, Lorenzo Livorsi's 'The "jeweled style" of late Roman constitutions', tests the boundaries of prose vs. poetry or "technical" vs. "literary" genres, exploring the influence of late antique poetry on the style of late Roman legislation.

Taken together, these three papers and Kate Cooper's response offer a fresh approach to understanding the distinctive literary aesthetics of late antiquity, both in poetry and prose. By exploring the interplay between poetic practice and bureaucratic culture, we hope to shed light on the realities of literary production and the 'real world' impact of poetry and literary culture in late Roman politics and society.

Ella Kirsh (Cambridge): *Puzzle as propaganda: Optatian in the lawcourts*

This paper will read Optatian's poems alongside legislation issued by the imperial court during Constantine I's rule (306–337 C.E.). Optatian's 'puzzle poems', written largely during the 310s and 320s, are among the most technically complex literary pieces to survive from late antiquity. Their political dimensions have traditionally been assessed through the lens of exile; Optatian's *carmina*, dedicated to the emperor, allegedly earned him a reprieve from a period of banishment and inaugurated a highly successful political career as a Roman senator, culminating in the governorship of Achaea and two short stints as *praefectus urbi* in 329 and 333 (Barnes 1975; Wienand in Squire/Wienand 2017; Jones Hall 2025). In addition to their literary pyrotechnics, the poems have offered insight into the lives of Optatian and Constantine and into the norms of early fourth-century panegyric.

My paper seeks to extend this analysis. Drawing on the records of documentary and legal material that survive from Optatian's political heyday, I will trace patterns of connection and disjunction between the values, concerns and

emphases espoused in Optatian's vigorously visual poetic material and those of the bureaucratic court that served as his context and backdrop.

Undoubtedly Optatian's poems, filled with praise for the emperor and sent in a very fine, calligraphic edition, flattered Constantine's ego and soothed his eye (Squire in Squire/Wienand 2017). My paper suggests that they also intervened in some of the key debates of the 320s and 330s, particularly surrounding the scope of the emperor's laws and his accessibility to petitioners, and the coalescing rules around the acquisition and management of domestic slaves. Finally, my paper considers the form of the puzzle poem, which demands prolonged engagement from the reader, as a vehicle for political and cultural messaging more broadly.

Alison John (Oxford and Liverpool): *Ausonius' linguistic puzzles: poetry and political culture at the court of Valentinian I*

This paper examines the place of elaborate and visual poetry within the highly bureaucratic world of the later fourth century. Poetic production and literary games were at the heart of the imperial court of Valentinian I, with the emperor himself instigating a cento-writing competition, and his *quaestor* Ausonius composing and performing his riddling *Griphus* over dinner, while accompanying the emperor on military campaign.

In exploring the interplay between late Latin poetry and politics, I will focus on the bilingual poetry of Ausonius, a Gallo-Roman poet, teacher and politician. After a thirty-year teaching career, Ausonius became tutor to Gratian, the son of the emperor Valentinian I, and later rose through the ranks of the imperial bureaucracy, eventually becoming Praetorian Prefect and Consul.

Ausonius' bilingual poetry displays his penchant for poetic puzzles and learned wordplay, and much of it is inherently visual: he makes bilingual jokes and innuendos that are only apparent when seen on the page, and he often plays with the relationship between the sight and sound of his elaborately-crafted verses. In *Epigram* 87, for example, Ausonius describes a teacher learning the letters of the Greek alphabet by having them correspond to parts of the female anatomy. The most visually arresting poem is *Ep*. 6 to Axius Paulus, in which Ausonius seamlessly blends Latin and Greek, writing Latin words in Greek script with Greek grammatical endings, and creating new compounds, switching between the two languages mid-word (e.g., gelidotρομεροὶ, πολυcantica, pinnoστέφανοι, etc.).

What was the relationship between this overly-complicated bilingual poetry and the highly bureaucratised culture of the later Roman court? What can Ausonius' poetic stylings tell us about the relationship between literary education and political culture, and about bilingual knowledge among the members of the western imperial court (e.g., emperors, bureaucrats, and scribes) in this period?

Lorenzo Livorsi (Bamberg): *The 'jeweled style' of late Roman constitutions*

Eduard Norden, in the *Antike Kunstprosa*, passed a damning verdict on the style of late Roman legislation: "pompous, pretentious, distorted to the point of complete unintelligibility". Nonetheless, his analysis remains valuable, as he first showed that laws reflect features common to poetry and oratory, and follow the precepts of contemporary theorists. Norden's view is comparable to old condemnations of late Latin poetry as overly focused on rhetorical effects, to the detriment of clarity of content. Michael Roberts' *The Jeweled Style* has since ushered in a new appreciation of the intrinsically late antique aesthetic qualities of poetry. This paper seeks to

nuance Norden's judgment: perhaps the constitutions deserve a reappraisal 'à la jeweled style'.

At a verbal level, laws display poetic colouring and intertextual allusions that enrich their legal content, defying the boundary between the "technical" and the "literary". Poetic echoes also feature prominently in panegyrics, a genre that modern scholarship values as a sophisticated instrument of political communication. Strikingly, the authors of panegyrics were sometimes the same bureaucrats in charge of writing laws, as shown, for instance, by the careers of Ausonius and Symmachus. Moreover, the constitutions were often intended for public recitation. To what extent does panegyric contribute to shaping the rhetorical structure of constitutions?

This paper discusses selected individual instances of poetic colour in the constitutions and then zooms in on a case-study. A law of Honorius from 418 (*epistula Arelatensis* 8), which designated Arles as the metropolitan city of the ecclesiastical diocese of Gaul, contains a "miniature panegyric" of the city. A close reading of the passage reveals that this law employs established rhetorical guidelines for praising cities (*laudes urbium*) to bolster this legal enactment. Stylistic and thematic convergences invite us to see panegyrics and constitutions as mutually reinforcing forms of political communication.

Kate Cooper (Royal Holloway): *Response*

SATURDAY 11th APRIL - SESSION 4: 09.00-11.00

PANEL 26 (Pedagogy Workshop): Improving Access through Digital Parsing Tools. Venue: #tbc

Organiser: Steve Hunt (Cambridge); Co-presenters and workshop facilitators: Rebecca Coe, Head of Classics (Hitchin Girls' School, Hitchin); Emma Cope (Head of Classics, Chelmsford County High School, Chelmsford)

The workshop has two objectives:

1. To report on some current uses of digital parsing tools for ancient languages teaching and learning
2. To develop a toolkit of recommended practices which improve access to learning ancient languages for all students

Digital parsing tools for ancient languages have existed for a long time. For example, the *Perseus Digital Library* started development in 1983. The *Cambridge Latin Course's* online digital resources were commissioned in 1999 (Lister, 2007). The *Electronic Pocket Oxford Latin Dictionary* was published in 2002. Joining these have been others, including the Paideia Institute's *Living Latin*, Bolchazy-Carducci's *Lumina Latin* and, most recently, Hands Up Education's *Suburani*. Of these, *Cambridge Latin* and *Suburani's* digital parsing tools are in widespread use both in and out of the classroom, and have attracted interest by researchers into their pedagogical use and learning value. On the whole, research outside the field of Classics Education has focused on the value of digital highlighting techniques to aid comprehension of complex texts (see, for example, Mason *et al.,* 2024). Teachers of ancient languages have, however, tended to use digital texts and the tools which go with them as a means to enable students to rapidly translate the text (with or without understanding understanding) without the traditional effort of having to use a traditional dictionary. They often share misgivings about how the ease of use of digital tools such as *Cambridge Latin's* Explorer tool enables students to make fast progress but potentially at the loss of learning vocabulary as effectively as traditional means might suggest (see, for example, Laserson, 2005; Hunt, 2018; Titcombe, 2022; Malik, 2024). By contrast, a recent study by (Coe *et al.,* 2024) investigated how the digital parsing tools of *Suburani* and *Cambridge Latin* enabled nearly all students of all academic attainment to complete translation of a text without loss of accuracy over traditional dictionary-supported means, allowing time to be devoted to deeper analysis of content or grammar in lessons, beneficial for all.

The workshop will be composed of a number of elements:

1. A brief presentation on current observed practices.
2. An update on research by the presenters.
3. Audience invited discussion about:
    a. Different levels information is provided at different stages of the *Suburani* and *Cambridge Latin* digital course book design. For example, the early stages of *Cambridge Latin* provide the 3rd person singular of verbs; later stages provide full principal parts. How might teachers incorporate it in curriculum design and teaching practice at each stage?
    b. Texts may serve different functions for language development. What sorts of information provided by the digital parsing tools are useful for

different types of reading / comprehension task (such as vocabulary acquisition, development of language knowledge, development of reading fluency, understanding of content), and how might teachers guide students to use it?

c. Digital parsing tools can be seen to be both an aid to comprehension of a text and also as a means of learning a language. How might a teacher navigate these different but entwined aims?

4. This will lead to the development of a toolkit for in-classroom practices (with the intention of publication in JCT).
5. Ending with a call for collaborators for future research.

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PANEL 27 (Pedagogy Workshop): Greek in UK Schools. Venue: #tbc

Organiser: Rosalind Aczel (Colchester Royal Grammar School) in collaboration with Gráinne Cassidy (Classical Association)

The study of Ancient Greek in UK secondary schools is in decline. This year, only 206 students sat the A Level. Access to Ancient Greek is even more precarious than to Latin with hardly any state schools offering the subject at all, let alone at A Level. Many independent schools who have previously offered it are struggling to maintain it as a subject in the current financial climate. For many students, their only opportunity to study Greek is in off-timetable clubs with significant time constraints, yet the GCSEs and A Levels are widely considered overly challenging in comparison to other subjects, including Latin. Resources are scarce for teachers who are not themselves confident in the subject and text books are out of date.

Nevertheless, there are causes for hope. Organisations like the Cambridge Greek Academy and the Winchester College (in its outreach project The Winchester Greek Club) have had great success in tapping latent demand for Greek, the former in an online setting, the latter in a community club, providing proven models that could be replicated elsewhere. The Intermediate Certificate in Classical Greek (ICCG) offers students for whom full GCSE might not be accessible an option to gain a pre-GCSE

qualification. Hands Up Education, who have produced the popular Suburani Latin textbook, are currently creating a beginners Greek textbook.

In recent months, a sub-committee organised by the Classical Association has been assessing the state of Greek in UK schools and discussing how to improve access and uptake. The purpose of this workshop would be to share with the wider Classics community the discussions that have been taking place within this sub-committee and the initiatives mentioned above.

The workshop consists of lightning talks followed by a more general discussion about the state of Greek in UK schools and its future. The workshop is chaired by Rosalind Aczel who is a member of the Classical Association Subject Advisory Committee and is currently trialling Hands Up Education's new Greek course with her Year 8 class at Colchester Royal Grammar School. Lisa Hay and Angela Nash from the Cambridge Greek Academy will take part in this workshop as will Gráinne Cassidy of the Classical Association. Invitations have also been sent to representatives from the ICCG and the JACT Greek Summer School at Bryanston among others.

PANEL 28 (Pedagogy Workshop): Getting Beyond Homer: Disabilities, Classics, and the Classroom. Venue: #tbc

Organisers: Jason Morris and Alexandra Morris (CripAntiquity)

Over the last eighteen months, CripAntiquity, a nonprofit dedicated to combating ableism in the fields of Classics, Ancient History, Archaeology, and Egyptology has hosted a series of events to foster a conversation about the experiences of the disabled, and the best practices for facilitating their participation in the classroom as both students and teachers. CripAntiquity would like to continue the conversation at the Classical Association Conference hosted by Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Manchester through a hybrid workshop organized by Dr. Jason C. Morris and Dr. Alexandra F. Morris of CripAntiquity.

Scheduled for two hours, the workshop consists of two parts. In the first part of the workshop, a series of presenters, consisting of Dr. Jason Morris, Dr. Alexandra F. Morris, Jessica Mingoia of Rutgers University, and two others still to be identified, all of whom are themselves disabled, will deliver lightning talks about their own experiences studying and teaching in the field. Each presentation will reflect a different type of disability. In keeping with the lightning format of presentation as outlined by the conference organizers, each of the presenters will speak for five minutes, addressing the challenges they have faced as both students and teachers, and on some of the best practices they have discovered for overcoming those difficulties. Each five-minute presentation will then be followed by ten minutes of questions and discussion amongst all the participants. Following the individual lightning presentations, the workshop will breakout into a period of general discussion where everyone can ask questions and make observations on the challenges of teaching disabled students or on being a disabled teacher.

PANEL 29 (Pedagogy Workshop): Interfaces of Knowledge: Classics research at Liverpool for the classroom. Venue: #tbc

Organisers: Benajmin Cartlidge (Liverpool) and Elaine Sanderson (Liverpool)

The Department of Archaeology, Classics, and Egyptology at the University of Liverpool has enjoyed numerous new appointments within the last four years. In this

workshop we aim to seek synergies between the new work going on in the department and the classical classroom both the in the north-west and beyond.
Possible topics for discussion include:

- ethnicity in the ancient world: data driven approaches
- emotions of crisis in Latin literature: corpus linguistics
- future directions in ancient environment studies
- papyrology and the classical classroom
- rethinking the Hellenistic world

These topics have synergies with several themes of the Classical Association Conference ('papyrology', 'Near East and the classical world', 'pedagogy', 'inscriptions and their audiences'), as well as being a major presentation of the presence of Classics in the north-west. The aim of the workshop is to explore how research into these topics can leverage new knowledge creation within curriculum frameworks. Given the new and developing research themes at Liverpool, the workshop will focus in particular on supporting Greek and Latin language GCSE's and A-Levels, the 'Invention of the Barbarian' and 'Politics of the Late Republic' components of A-Level Classical Civilisation, the 'Alexander the Great', 'Hannibal and the Second Punic War', and 'Cleopatra: Rome and Egypt' depth studies for GCSE Ancient History in the first instance.

To that end, we wish to listen to concerns about the current classics curriculum – what is missing? what could be done better? – as well as strengths – what is liked? what should there be more of? what are our discipline's success stories? – with a view to supporting teachers and their students. The aim is to open up a dialogue between our university and other educational institutions in the north-west and beyond.
We will structure the workshop around 'lightening presentations' of research at the University of Liverpool; these will be the springboard for discussion of what resources might best be created to target aspects of the classical curriculum. Such resources might include workshops for students; student involvement in classical research; training days for teachers; pedagogical materials; website creation; or options that have not yet occurred to us – we are open to ideas!
The objectives of the discussion will be the creation of a list of desiderata that will feed future engagement activities at Liverpool. Further, we wish to think about questions of method – whether mixed / interdisciplinary methods; linguistics methods; or traditional philological methods: how do these approaches connect with the classroom? We also intend to build relationships between our department and schools across Britain, with particular emphasis on the north-west. We are a group of young scholars keen to position ourselves to attract bright students to the humanities track, and to show the value of humanities education to a new generation. Schools and universities have never needed to work together more urgently than now to safeguard the 'humanities pipeline'.

This workshop is the start of a new paradigm of educational team-building between the lecture-hall and the classroom. Speakers include: Dr Andrew Fox, Dr Marco Perale, Dr Charlotte van Regenmortel

PANEL 30: Environment 4: Rural Agriculture. Chair: Duncan Keenan-Jones (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Lluís Jerez Bertolín (Independent Scholar): *Middlemen, Contractors, Supervisors: Towards a Taxonomy of Harvest Intermediaries in the Ancient World*

The harvest was a crucial and delicate operation in the ancient world, that required much attention and the procurement of additional labour. Ancient sources document the use of intermediaries, employed by landowners or their representatives, to organise and execute the harvest operation. These intermediaries are especially well-documented in the Roman world, particularly in Italy, Northern Africa and Egypt. Available sources range from literary works to papyri and even an inscription (the infamous Harvester of Maktar), showcasing the pervasiveness of harvest intermediaries. Other sources outside the Roman world include the book of Ruth, the Mishnah, Old Babylonian contracts and contracts from Ptolemaic Egypt. These intermediaries are reported to have had varied responsibilities: procure workers, supervise them, work themselves in the harvest, pre-purchase the harvested crop or provide guarantees towards the proper execution of the harvest. However, not every intermediary seems to have had the same responsibilities or role. Unfortunately, there has not been an attempt to identify and organise the different types of harvest intermediaries in the ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern world and their responsibilities. This can lead to confusion between them and undue conflation. For example, the intermediaries attested in Old Babylonian contracts appear to merely have a duty to procure a small number of workers and work themselves, with the employer pooling together the contributions of the various intermediaries, while in Cato's model contract on olive harvesting the intermediary assumes responsibility for the proper execution of the harvest, besides providing the harvesters, and appears to be the only intermediary employed. This paper will emphasise the importance of correctly identifying the different types of harvest intermediaries, theorise what types of harvest intermediary existed in the ancient world to typify them and will ask why these different types were deployed in their particular historical context.

Margaret Daily (London), *The Little Bean that Could: The Role of Legumes in an Increasingly Growing Economy*

During the process of Roman expansion, the Mediterranean went through several changes, some of which mirror the modern concept of globalisation, as economic and political systems became increasingly unified. This included the diets and culinary desires of its occupants. Of the Mediterranean triad, which consists of cereals, olives, and wine, cereals are the only constant across the varied landscapes and environments of the empire and thus have received most academic attention. Cereals, such as wheat, barley, and emmer, exist within their own hierarchy, depending on the specific cultivar, processing, location and preferences of the consumers, and were preferred by the upper classes. Nonetheless, despite the modern difference between the two, legumes were included into the wider category of cereals. However, they were considered the 'poor man's meat': fit to be used as animal fodder. They thus still remain an underutilised point of entry into the nutritional and agricultural needs of the wider Roman population. Ancient literary sources, such as Cato the Elder, Columella, and Apicius, mention the use and benefits of legumes for daily consumption and intercropping, specifically for soil maintenance, though they were not considered to be a lucrative endeavour or of a high quality. They were mainly consumed by the lower classes and make up a substantial portion of their daily caloric intake. Through

the use of archaeobotanical data, as well as epigraphical and literary sources, this paper will offer an analysis of the hierarchy of legumes imposed by upper-class agronomists and culinary authors, and how this categorisation served a wider purpose. This will be done through the comparison of growing practices, uses and enjoyment by those who relied on them for their needs, which could range from agricultural diversity to providing a safety net in times of scarcity.

John Weeds (Reading): *"A king's estate of choice land": harvest home in Archaic Greek poetry*

This paper examines the representation of the harvest in Homer (The Odyssey and The Iliad), Hesiod (Works and Days) and the Hesiodic Shield of Herakles. It begins with a resumé of scenes from the Shield ekphrases of both Homer and the Hesiodic Shield, and Hesiod's farmer's calendar. The focus here is the timing of the harvest process and the seasonal setting. I touch on the practicalities of the farm workers' method, the implements used and the way the work is supervised.

The focus then shifts to the farm imagery related to Ithaca. Unlike the Shield scenes, farming here has been disrupted and neglected for twenty years in the absence of Odysseus. On his return, it is clear to him that the land has been neglected. Harvesting, like all other normal agricultural activities such as ploughing and sowing, has been suspended while the Suitors have consumed whatever produce there is. They have not, however, cultivated the plant crops or animal herds needed to replenish the stocks they have eaten. This is in stark contrast to the approach of the hero's father, Laertes, during this time. What are the moral implications of this?

Next, the paper deals with a different type of harvest: Odysseus's violent wreaking of his revenge on the Suitors. I explore the extent to which Homer imagines this episode as a grim harvest of souls. The style and imagery of the slaughter scenes are examined for their resonance with scenes of agricultural harvest.

The conclusion picks up the theme of morality and its bearing on working the land. It reflects on the moral value imputed by Homer and Hesiod to the timing of farm activities, to the proper observance of signs in nature that ploughing/sowing/harvesting are due, and finally to justness of farming in way that is respectful of the gods.

Magnus Knutsen (University of Bergen): *The Shifting Landscapes of Hellenistic Arcadia*

Following a golden age of Greek survey archaeology in the 1970-90s, classical archaeologists and historians now possess a rich archaeological record of the inhabitation and use of Greek landscapes in antiquity. However, how we are to understand these landscapes remains contested. One trend emerging from the material, has been the dramatic decline in site numbers which takes place at some point during the Hellenistic period. This development has received varied explanations, with recent scholarship emphasizing the importance of region-specific factors and trajectories, as opposed to a grand overarching narrative. The paper will therefore demonstrate how the observed patterns should be understood in light of the region's particular setting, including considerations of Arcadian connectivity, landownership, economy, and political constellations. Considering this emphasis on landscape and resources the paper should fit well with the conference theme: Environment, Resources and the Ancient World.

The core of this case study consists of a set of 7 surveys conducted in the Arcadian region. By combining the archaeological survey material with empirical

evidence from the surveyed areas in what I have called "Landscape Fingerprints" – essentially quantitative representations of the various survey-areas including archaeological, topographical, and ecological data – and by further contextualizing these fingerprints with qualitative historical analysis, the paper has two main aims: First), to provide for the first time a rigorous synthesis of the patchy Arcadian survey data, and second), to offer novel and regionally sensitive hypotheses for the observed settlement patterns.

PANEL 31: Queer Receptions of Classical Antiquity in 'Low-Culture'. Chair: Alex MacFarlane (Birmingham); venue: #tbc

Receptions of all parts of classical antiquity maintain keen attention in the modern world. New interpretations of classical myth and culture continue to cultivate engagements among all people from the most esteemed scholar to very young children. However, most academic participation with these manifestations of classics primarily draws from two areas: either preexisting fields of study in their own right (film studies, literature, art), or high-culture creative outputs (theatre, music, ballet). While some of these are very broad topics, it becomes apparent that when one speaks of 'classics in theatre' they mostly refer to stagings of classical tragedies and not allusions in pantomimes, and 'classics in art and fashion' rarely (if ever) includes consideration of drag performance. If someone speaks of various receptions, they have a distinct subtext of referring primarily to the high-culture versions of those topics. While postmodernist perspectives would argue that the division between high- and low-cultures is an artificially imposed dichotomy, it remains that perceptions of social class continue to impose a hierarchy on many cultural outputs. This results in some areas of classical receptions being overlooked and undervalued.

Moreover, the same issues are present for queer receptions of antiquity. Often, these topics are not considered high-brow or suitable for polite academic discussion. Many forms of queer art have been forced by necessity to remain subculture or 'underground' forms due to concerns about safety or legality. This means that much of it has been naturally excluded from entry to high-culture. However, queerness that is both an identity and operates in society as readily aestheticised can sometimes work against queer working-class individuals who cannot call upon the financial and cultural capital to legitimise their identities (Taylor 2009). Therefore, while both queerness and social class operate individually to exclude meaningful interaction with the high-culture world of classics, the two together are doubly impacted.

So, what becomes of the 'importance' or 'utility' of classics that is both queer and low-culture? This is especially salient during a time in which there are many discussions surrounding working-class classicists and the history of queer art and classics. For example, recent debates have considered the barriers they face, the importance of inclusion, and the issues around the classist/homophobic history of classics as a discipline. This panel hopes to bring some examples of queer low-culture classics to light and argue for their necessity in scholarly dialogue.

The first section of the panel presents papers exploring particular examples of queer(ed) low-culture performance and their relationships to classics and the classical body. Where both queerness and class are "written on the body", the panel speakers consider the ways in which these intersect in performance of classical themes. The first paper views this from the perspective of classic(ising) aesthetics in drag and drag reality television, aiming to explore how it calls upon the classical as a benchmark of an idealised body. The second paper aims to view the queer(ed) gender performance in modern British pantomime through reference to Dionysus and *Bacchae*,

demonstrating the similarities in their 'topsy-turvy' gender performances. Following this, there will be an extended roundtable with the aim of opening out to broader discussion. This will allow for the speakers to remark upon additional examples of low-culture/queer classical receptions (e.g., street art, internet subculture and meme, 'trash' television). Furthermore, the speakers will be invited to contribute analyses of the racial dimensions of defining high- or low-culture outputs and how this intersects with issues of claims to classical heritage, since these aspects so closely intersect with (and are perhaps inseparable from) issues of queerness and social class. It is thus intended that more attention is given to classical receptions from the perspective of 'Poor Queer Studies' – queer studies that pay due attention to the impact of social class and poverty (see Brim 2020) – and some broader interconnecting issues. This will provide the opportunity to redirect scholarly discussion towards frequently neglected art forms and performance cultures.

Lily Bickers (Bristol) and Izzy Levy (Independent): *"Stop Relying on that Body!" Rupaul's Drag Race and the Classical Ideal*

This paper explores the influence of Classicising aesthetics on the queer reality TV competition show Rupaul's *Drag Race* (2009-). We argue that *Drag Race* participates in the idealising reception history of the Classical body (see Squire 2011), even using Classical reception to legitimate its aesthetic standards for drag. However, in refracting the Classical body through the prism of drag embodiment, *Drag Race* also complicates and queers visual and performed receptions. In particular, the Classicising gestures of individual competitors make more radical interventions into what a Classical body in drag can be.

We begin by contextualising *Drag Race's* primary touchpoint for Classical Reception in the 'glamazon', inherited from 1980s fashion and the work of Thierry Mugler. On *Drag Race*, the glamazon image refracts the old relationship between the cult of the 'ideal body' and Greco-Roman statuary through a complex queer lens. What does it mean to transform the defeated, too-masculine body of the Amazon in ancient art into a queer yet idealised image of 'girl power'? How does this image reinforce the aesthetic standards of *Drag Race*, which have been critiqued for imposing colonial and transphobic regimes of bodily control on drag as a medium (Khubchandani 2023)?

In answer, we examine instances in which *Drag Race* invokes the Classical body as a benchmark for its ideals. This occurs both in competitors' fashion runways and in challenges, such as the third season's "Champion" music video, which styles its participants as Greek goddesses, living statuary, and Olympian athletes. Finally, we consider two case studies of queens whose invocations of Classical art and architecture break the mould of *Drag Race's* narrow aesthetic vision. These performers offer a counter-narrative within *Drag Race*, pushing the boundaries of the show's visual norms around Classical reception, exploring and exploding the transformative queer potential of the Classical.

Alex MacFarlane (Birmingham): *Dionysus, Bacchae, and Gender Performance in Modern British Pantomime*

It is not new to observe that *Bacchae* interacts extensively with distinctions of gender and cross-dressing. Dionysus especially is a figure closely tied to breaking down the boundaries between groups, from gender binaries to social class. I argue that his influence on the theatricality of gender in the play is reminiscent of modern camp stylings. Indeed, those modern productions of *Bacchae* that lean into camp elements

have been criticised for taking away from the sense of tragedy; to overtly 'queer' the performance is apparently to trivialise it (Ruffell 2022). This insistence that theatre only maintains merit if it takes itself seriously reads as a fundamental misunderstanding of most genres of theatrical performance (if not the spirit of theatre overall). However, this same attitude has led many to overlook the connections between a camp Dionysus and similar gender presentations in pantomime.

Modern British pantomime draws on a number of cross-dressing and gender subversive stock styles, almost always including a Dame (an older man in drag) and often some additional camp notes. Even in the 1900s, where anti-homosexual cultural shifts would otherwise repress cases of cross-dressing and drag performance, pantomime was apparently deemed innocuous enough to retain its gender subversive acts (Senelick 2000). While some definitions of low-culture define it as having less in-depth artistic merit, I argue that pantomime – as a production crafted for both mass appeal and owing much to the long history of theatre and folklore – has much to offer classicists in viewing (the performance of) gender on-stage. Scholars have noted that pantomime creates a space that breaks down barriers between groups, allowing for "topsy-turvy" inversions of typical power dynamics and social roles (Ardener 2005). This harkens back to the influences of Dionysus in both *Bacchae* and across Classical theatre overall.

Alexandra Hardwick (Oxford), Alex MacFarlane (Birmingham), Lily Bickers (Bristol), Izzy Levy (Independent)*: Roundtable: Classism, Queer Subculture, and Classical Receptions*

What merit is there to reconsider the cultural and scholarly worth of that which has been largely deemed of low cultural and scholarly value? This extended-length roundtable will open up from more concentrated case studies to a broader dialogue on the breadth of low-culture and queer classical receptions. The speakers argue for the importance of studying classics at the intersection of social class and queerness, considering how the underappreciation of these cultural outputs interacts with wider prejudices in academia and society more generally. They are invited to explore additional examples of low-culture/queer receptions and examine the role of various class-based/queer subcultures in interacting with classics and (claims of) classical heritage. Furthermore, a supplementary dimension for discussion is the additional impact of race and ethnicity. This can be interpreted from the perspective of the interactions between racial identity and queerness, but also in terms of the history of defining what is considered high- or low-culture art. Sufficient attention must also be paid to the impact of emerging technologies and the ways in which these allow for the creation of new art forms and subcultures that do not have the history and prestige to access high-culture (nor to garner significant scholarly attention). Though guided by the panel chair where necessary, the roundtable is intended to encourage new analysis and will be responsive to the direction of observations from both the speakers and audience members. This will ensure that attendees will be able to engage more directly with the conversation around classical heritage and queer classics as it pertains to social class and reception studies.

PANEL 32: Homer and the Homeric Hymns. Chair: Manos Tsakiris (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Zarifah Nawar (London): *'Tityos, Tantalus & Sisyphus: Why are incorporeal sinners physically punished in Hades?'*

In the *Odyssey's* Book 11, Odysseus witnesses the punishments of Tityos, Tantalus and Sisyphus in Hades. Prior to this, Odysseus' mother states that the dead are incorporeal in the underworld. This paper investigates why these dead characters are depicted receiving physical punishments, despite being incorporeal.

The paper focuses on the language used regarding physical pain in the Homeric epics. It contrasts the depiction of pain during scenes of death and injury in the *Iliad*, with the pain of the three dead characters in the *Odyssey*. This highlights that in the latter case, Homer uses more metaphorical language. As a result, the internal and external audiences of the epic infer that the characters are in pain, rather than concluding that they are physically affected. The ψῡχαί of the dead are incapable of actually feeling things. Therefore, Homer downplays the physicality of the punishments. Instead the poet makes the punishments appear painful in the audiences' minds through the use of metaphor.

Homer's purpose in enabling the audience to visualise the pain of the dead characters in Hades, is to convey the implications of committing extreme wrongs. Tityos, Tantalus and Sisyphus are all responsible for actions which are hubristic. Their extreme punishments serve as a deterrent from committing such actions, which threaten the social and cosmic order. The three characters are made into an example for mortals on how justice is enacted by the gods. Thus, the episode explored in this paper contributes to a broader understanding of the Homeric afterlife, and how it fits into the overarching theme of justice.

Jurgen R. Gatt (University of Malta); Jan Berssenbruegge (Berlin-Freie Universität): *'Unveering' Speech and 'Unveering' Knowledge in Homer and Herodotus*

The In this paper, we examine the term ἀτρεκές in Homer and Herodotus. We show that marked statistical differences separate the use of this term in the two authors, and argue that these differences challenge both the supposed Homeric nature of Herodotean rhetoric (Marincola, 2007; Pelling 2006) and claims that Herodotus adhered to an archaic notion of truth as dependent on socially sanctioned performances of traditional tales (Shrimpton, 1997; Murray, 2001; cf. Evans, 1992).

One difference lies in the verbs qualified by the adverbial form ἀτρεκέως. In Homer, it is uniquely applied to acts of speaking, most often καταλεγεῖν and ἀγορεύειν. In Herodotus, it qualifies speech acts as well (including καταλεγεῖν once), but far more frequently designates acts of knowing (about 48% of cases). Thus, whereas Homeric characters describe only 'accounts' as 'unveering', Herodotus also applies the term to 'accurate' propositional knowledge. While Homer occasionally associates ἀτρεκέως with other truth-terms (ἐτέον, νημερτές), Herodotus makes its veridical force more explicit, reflecting a heightened rhetorical concern with accuracy.

A second difference concerns the kinds of claims described as ἀτρεκέως. In Homer, the term appears exclusively in speeches of characters, either demanding or promising accurate speech. Predictably, given the Odyssey's stronger emphasis on informative language (Beck, 2003; Usener 1990), it is more common there than in the Iliad. In Herodotus, however, such uses are rare: the imperative form occurs only once, in Xerxes' speech. More often (about 60%), the historian employs the adverb in

reference to his own speech or knowledge, or occasionally to information reported to him (e.g. Hdt. 2.28). An even sharper contrast emerges from negation: the adverb is never negated in Homer but more often negated than affirmed in Herodotus. Herodotean characters may meet the Homeric ideal by declaring their accounts ἀτρεκέως; Herodotus himself more often denies such accuracy in his own logos. This shift, we argue, marks the distinct rhetorical voice of Herodotus noted by other scholars (esp. Lateiner, 1989; Flower, 1996).

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Frances Pickworth (Bristol): *A Poetic Hijack: The Cretan Sailors in the Homeric Hymn to Apollo*

In the final part of his Homeric hymn, Apollo—in dolphin form—redirects some Cretan sailors to Crisa and makes them his Delphic priests (388ff.). Scholars have explained his choice of Cretans as arbitrary (Clay 1989), intended to ensure the priests' neutrality (Miller 1986), or a recollection of ancient connections between Crete and Delphi (Huxley 1975; Förstel 1979; Richardson 2010). Faraone (2018), following Malkin (2000), instead proposes that the episode reworks an older hymn in which colonising Cretans established the worship of Apollo Delphinios at Crisa before the Delphic oracle was founded. The *Hymn*, on this view, strips the Cretans of agency and makes Delphi, not Crisa, the first foundation.

In this paper I bolster Faraone's historical and archaeological case through close literary analysis. After reviewing evidence for Crete's privileged connection with Apollo and Delphi in the Archaic imagination, I turn to the *Hymn* itself, where the Cretans are presented in two guises: paean-singers and oracular announcers on the one hand, merchants and pirates on the other. Grammatical tense, I argue, helps to resolve this tension: the former view characterises the Cretans of the audience's present, the latter those of the mythical past. This temporal distinction allows the *Hymn* to portray Crete's cultural and religious prestige not as a prior fact but as the consequence of Apollo's intervention.

Verbal and thematic echoes of the *Odyssey* in this part of the *Hymn* reinforce this strategy. On Ithaca, Odysseus adopts the persona of a marauding Cretan to tell a series of lying tales, which Tsagalis argues 'deauthorise' rival Odysseus-traditions (2012). The *Hymn*'s adoption of the 'piratical Cretan stranger' trope, I suggest, reveals a similar agenda. I conclude that the *Hymn* systematically undermines the Cretans in order to downplay Cretan influence at Delphi and deny the priority of Crisa as an Apolline cult centre.

Freya Riebling (Horace Mann School): *The Parable of the Prayers: A Research Note on Iliad 9.496-512*

At *Iliad* 9.496-512, often called the Parable of the Prayers, has long puzzled scholars. The parable introduces ideas on human motivation, "the most profound subject in the entire world" (Lukacs), yet its logic appears internally inconsistent, combining the belief that God sends unhappiness with the belief that man brings it on himself. This paper aims to clarify the passage's moral psychology by analyzing several of its key terms: λιταί, βλάπτω, and, above all, ἄτη. Where earlier scholarship reads ἄτη as blindness (Doyle, Griffin), ruin (Cairns), or being blown off-course (Nagy 1990), I argue that ἄτη is best understood as a dynamic of disorientation whose inevitable sequel is harm.

My argument has three parts. First, by synthesizing philological treatments from Cunliffe to Porter, I trace the lexical field of ἄτη and βλάπτω across Homer and find that disorientation plus- damage is the only meaning that satisfies every

occurrence. Second, I analyze the parable's internal choreography: ἄτη's swiftness encodes the inevitability of mistaken action, while the λιταί's physical impairments index the belatedness and vulnerability of remorse. Finally, I read the parable's framing devices—imperative δάμασον, proverbial στρεπτοί καὶ θεοί, and the juxtaposition of θυμός and φρένες—as a didactic markers, linking Phoenix's pedagogical authority, Zeus' cosmic sanction, and the Achaean embassy's political-educational purpose.

Building on this analysis, I interpret the ἄτη-chain as a compound of cognitive lapse and social consequence. In essence, the parable stages an ethics of error and repair. Agamemnon's seizure of Briseis prompts the initial disorientation; the embassy embodies the healing λιταί; and Achilles' refusal triggers a second cycle of harm, culminating in Patroclus' death. More broadly, this study positions the parable at the center of Homeric thinking on error, compensation and communal ethics. Homer articulates a restorative ethics in which individual/communal recognition, not divine caprice, ultimately arrests the spiral of ruin.

The paper concludes by sketching avenues for further research, especially in literary studies. Most importantly, if ἄτη is read as disorientation, then what Lowe calls "The Classical Plot and the Invention of Western Narrative" may be reconceived as a journey from disorientation to reorientation. For Homer's heroes—as for later protagonists from Oedipus to Dr. Jekyll to Jay Gatsby—the problem of ἄτη is the problem of how to see one's own blindness. In this way, the Parable of the Prayers is an apt metaphor for the human condition itself.

PANEL 33: Roman Provincial Conflict. Chair: Jo Ball (MMU); venue: #tbc

Briony Stephenson (Cambridge and Stanford): *The influence of custom and constitution on the Second Punic War*

The conduct of the Second Punic War (218 – 201 BCE) was influenced by the political institutions and cultural practices of Rome and Carthage as much as by the character and ability of their commanders. Despite similarities between the Carthaginian and Roman constitutions, Carthage observed a strict division between civil and military officials. This paper begins by considering recent scholarship around the relationship between the two spheres of Carthaginian power (Feeney, 2022; Taylor, 2023) to draw comparisons with Rome's military and political ideology, mapping these to the two states' fortunes during the Hannibalic War. I then look at how Rome learnt from Carthaginian expertise in alliance-building and exploitation of interstate relations over the course of the war. Finally, the paper turns to Carthaginian and Roman approaches to the treatment of enemies and religion in warfare. Although the Roman bias in the ancient sources obscures the Carthaginian picture, there is sufficient detail in both Polybius' and Livy's accounts to understand that both Roman and Carthaginian leader made similar propagandistic and pragmatic use of clemency, terror and the divine in conducting the war. The depictions of violence in the primary sources inevitably raises the question of the inherent bellicosity of these ancient societies. The modern tendency is often to view Rome as particularly belligerent among its Mediterranean contemporaries (Roth, 2020), while there is less of a consensus regarding Carthage. Based on the political and cultural factors contemplated here, it appears that the Carthaginian elite was less oriented towards warfare, although there are important counterarguments, such as the significance of military dynasties like Hannibal's own family, the Barcids. More apparent is that the greater autonomy enjoyed by Carthaginian commanders, their focus on long-term campaigning over personal reward and deep experience of navigating interstate

relations contributed to Hannibal's early success, although the cohesion between Senate and military would eventually prove the Roman model the more resilient.

Jasmine Klein (Swansea): *"Pests" and Predators: Gendercide and the Rhetoric of Elimination in Caesar's Gaul*

This paper examines the targeting of occupied populations reproductive capacity during the Gallic Wars, which effectively eliminated both the opportunity and ability for intergenerational cultural transmission. Such violence functioned as a weapon of Roman domination and as a means of consolidating Gaul as a budding provincial territory. The concept of gendercide provides a framework for articulating the fragmentation of social structures produced by Roman methods of control, resulting in what may be described as social death through mass enslavement, forced displacement, massacre, and urban annihilation. Caesar's own accounts offer crucial insight into these dynamics and their implications for the reproductive capacities of the Gallic tribes. A striking example is the siege of Avaricum in 52 BCE, where Caesar reports that his forces killed approximately 40,000 inhabitants, sparing neither women nor children. This massacre not only decimated the population but also disrupted the social and reproductive foundations of Gallic society. Such acts align with Elisa von Joeden-Forgey's concept of "*life force atrocities*," in which the destruction of a group's reproductive potential is central to genocidal strategy. Similarly, Caesar's policy of mass enslavement, also documented in his writings, involved the capture and sale of thousands of Gauls. Beyond generating economic gain, this practice dismantled kinship networks and severed lines of cultural knowledge exchange, further eroding Gallic identity. By integrating historical accounts with contemporary genocide frameworks, this paper highlights the gendered dimensions of Caesar's campaigns. It positions reproductive violence as a deliberate strategy in ancient warfare and demonstrates how concepts from genocide studies can illuminate the logic of domination in episodes of colonialism in antiquity.

Connor Hickey (St Andrews): *I, Civilis: Finding Identity in Tacitus' Batavian Revolt*

This paper examines the problems faced in adequately distinguishing the categorizing concepts of 'Roman' and 'non-Roman'. Focusing on Tacitus' account of the Batavian Revolt as case-study, I explore how ancient and modern writers approach notions of identity, specifically when confronted with discordant episodes in which 'non-Roman' insurgents were commanded by generals aligned with the Roman state through citizenship.

As an etic term, 'Roman' is often presumed a self-evident expression, referring to anything within (or relating to) the Roman state. Conversely, anything outside of (or unrelated to) this state must be classed as 'non-Roman'. However, recent scholarly attention has queried the apparent neatness of such labels. Lavan, for example, observes that 'Roman' appears indiscriminately used by historians as an emic and etic category (Lavan 2020: 38-9); through analysis of the terms *Romani* and *Rhomaioi*, Lavan argues that 'we should not presume that we already know who the 'Romans' are', as the terms are 'vague' and their meaning 'is highly dependent on the context' (ibid: 56).

Accordingly, this paper explores the complexities of defining 'Roman identity' through examination of narratives in which notions of what was/was not Roman were most strained, i.e. 'native insurrections'. First, I will provide a basic overview as to the main theories of 'national identity', situating our discussions on Roman identity within the broader discourse of identity studies. Having established this theoretical

framework, my paper will interrogate a specific instance of 'native insurrection', where anxieties over the blurring of boundaries between Roman and provincial identity pervade. Vividly recorded in Books 4-5 of his *Histories*, Tacitus' characterization of the insurgency's leader, Julius Civilis, (in)famously blurs the distinctions between Roman and 'barbarian' identities, constituting a rich medium in which to explore notions of 'Romanness' in antiquity. The paper intersects with themes currently absent from the conference programme, advocating for greater debate on identity in antiquity, and contemporary (mis)understandings of it.

PANEL 34: Inscriptions and their Audiences 1: Audiences Ancient and Modern. Chair: Alison Cooley (Warwick); venue: #tbc

This panel offers new ways of thinking about the conference theme, 'Inscriptions and Their Audiences'. Traditionally, this theme has attracted scholarship that focuses upon questions of literacy (Bodel 2014) or monumentality (Cooley 2012), with more recent approaches also turning to the 'spatial turn' for inspiration, exploring the importance of ritual and performance (Breitenfeld 2023), or examining the idea of 'documentality' (Arthur-Montagne, DiGiulio, and Kuin 2022). Our panel, however, will explore new approaches and methodologies for understanding the range of responses which inscriptions could evoke in different viewers, ancient and modern.

Three papers will examine different ways in which inscriptions have been viewed by their contemporaries in the Roman world. They will focus on case studies from both Rome and the provinces, combining in-depth analysis of individual inscriptions along with a consideration of patterns that emerge from groups of inscriptions. A fourth paper will focus on the way in which new agendas were devised for the audiences of inscriptions via their display in museums, with a focus on inscriptions as educational sources, designed to promote the historical interpretation of the Roman past. Papers will draw upon approaches from the social sciences to offer interdisciplinary perspectives upon Roman inscriptions, allowing the speakers to go beyond the insights offered by considering inscriptions not just as texts but as inscribed objects, in order to present new ways of contextualising Latin inscriptions. Epigraphy is fundamentally a communicative medium, but what might that actually mean in different contexts?

Chris Parr (Warwick): *Inscriptions and Memory in Rome's Fora*

Inscriptions provide the ancient historian with a wealth of first-hand information that may otherwise have been lost to us (Beltrán Lloris, 2014), but their historical value goes far beyond what is written. The survival of many inscriptions to the modern day reminds us that epigraphy is a commemorative tool and that, just as with other Roman monuments, the authors of inscriptions have their own agendas in preserving information through monuments (Cooley, 2012; Hölkeskamp, 2015). Inscriptions acted as containers of memory, preserving and promoting a particular view of the past that could be shared with contemporaries and later generations. This was particularly prominent in the *forum Romanum*, a 'container of collective consciousness' (Favro, 1988) for the Romans of the Republic, and in the imperial *fora*, which had similarly monumental overtones.

I will use theories of collective and cultural memory from the field of memory studies to explore how monumental inscriptions in the *forum Romanum* and the imperial *fora* were used to shape the memories prominent in Roman society. Through case studies of inscriptions in the *fora*, I will discuss how the epigraphic landscape of this culturally significant area of Rome served as the backdrop for the struggle to

control the socially formed memories of Rome's people. For example, the monumental inscriptions of the *fasti consulares* and the *fasti triumphales*, found in the *forum Romanum*, were not simply records of great figures from Rome's past but were designed to provide a specific view of Rome's past that diminished the accomplishments of Rome's senatorial elite during the Republic and framed Augustus as the culmination of Roman history. Whilst the *fasti* inscriptions purported to preserve Rome's past and facilitate remembrance of great Romans, they were a tool used to subjugate Rome's senatorial elite and remind them of their place in society beneath Augustus.

Jurriaan Gouw (Warwick): *Lares Traiani: The Emperor through the Eyes of the City of Rome*

In recent years there has been a growing move towards the reinterpretation of Latin inscriptions within their social contexts, and the utilisation of new methodological and interdisciplinary approaches (Cousins 2022; Benefiel and Keesling 2024). These approaches have provided particular utility in the study of specific epigraphic corpora, such as the *lares Augusti* shrines erected across the city of Rome by the local *vici* within the city.

The *lares* shrines of the Augustan period have seen a particular focus (Tarpin 2002; Lott 2004; Flower 2017; Russell 2020) due in part to the reorganisation of the *vici* in 7 BC and the large number of surviving inscriptions. A key insight from this research has been the two-way exchange in the creation of imperial imagery, between the imperial centre and the messages it sought to convey, and the self-fashioning of the local magistrates whose names and reputations were enhanced by the curation of the shrine.

In this paper, I seek to consider another corpus of *lares* inscriptions from the Trajanic period, alongside other contemporary examples erected by groups within the city, such as the thirty-five tribes. In doing so, I will demonstrate the constraints faced by the imperial centre in the creation of Trajan's image against the expectations and traditions of their audience, the *vici*, within the city.

This study will bring together analysis of the inscriptions as texts, including their content and messaging, and as part of a communicative network within the city of Rome, both temporally and spatially. This will be done in comparison to other mediums, such as the imperial coinage, over which the emperor had greater control, in order to elucidate the reciprocal nature of the creation, perception and memory of imperial image.

Carlos Enríquez de Salamanca (Warwick): *Origo intra civitatem as an epigraphic discourse of identity in Baetica: an analysis through social practice theory*

This paper investigates epigraphic mentions of *origo* within Roman inscriptions discovered in the province of Hispania Ulterior Baetica, focusing on cases where the attested *origo* matches the city in which the inscription was found, i.e., *origo intra civitatem*. While *origo* typically functioned to indicate external origin or civic belonging, *origo intra civitatem* was a rather common phenomenon in Baetica (around one-third of cases). Its appearance raises important questions about local identity, civic belonging, and the discourse surrounding identity in the province, and begs the question as to why this phenomenon was so abundant in Baetica.

Drawing on a corpus of funerary, honorary, and dedicatory inscriptions from cities across the province, alongside comparisons with other Roman provinces (Derks 2009; Noy 2010), I examine the motivations behind *origo intra civitatem* and the reactions

to this phenomenon, which has seldom been given the attention it deserves. The analysis suggests several possible explanations: even in one's home city, declaring *origo* could reinforce ties to a specific *civitas* (Revell 2016, 53-54), assert Roman or local citizenship through municipal association (González and Ramírez 2007), or distinguish oneself within a socially stratified environment. These declarations were made with an awareness of an epigraphic audience increasingly preoccupied with local identities and for whom such statements carried social meaning, whether affirming belonging or signalling status. The paper further explores how these inscriptions relate to patterns of mobility, supra-local elites, and local 'patriotism' in Baetica (Andreu Pintado 2008). Ultimately, the study argues that intra-urban *origo* references reflect more than mere redundancy; they are deliberate affirmations of civic identity that highlight the layered nature of Roman self-representation in a seemingly Romanized but locally conscious society. Furthermore, it shows how this phenomenon was part of a province-wide discourse concerning the practices of identity display in inscriptions. The findings may contribute to broader discussions on Roman identity formation in the provinces.

Ludovico M. Bevilacqua (Ca' Foscari University of Venice / University of Warwick): ***A modern audience for ancient inscriptions: musealising inscribed monuments at the turn of the eighteenth century***

At the end of the ancient world, inscriptions, like many other monuments, gradually lost their practical function as communicative media and were largely abandoned or reused as building materials. It was only during the Renaissance that they began to be reappraised as historical sources for understanding the past, thanks to pioneering Classical scholarship, and were incorporated into private collections of antiquities. There, they were once again displayed before a new, select audience, although primarily as symbols of their owner's wealth and cultural refinement.

In the seventeenth century, alongside the creation of the first real "Museums" of curiosities, which were, by definition, intended to be accessible to the general public, the visibility of ancient inscriptions also increased. The most noteworthy example took place in Oxford, where in 1667 – just a few years before the nearby establishment of the Ashmolean Museum, the world's first public museum – hundreds of inscriptions from the former Arundel collection were displayed on the walls surrounding the new Sheldonian Theatre and were publicly accessible, even if arranged purely for aesthetic effect.

A real turning point in this process was marked by the establishment of the first public museum entirely dedicated to ancient inscriptions: the Lapidary Museum of Verona, founded by the Italian marquis Scipione Maffei (1675–1755) at the turn of the eighteenth century. Building on earlier experiences such as Oxford's, Maffei gathered hundreds of ancient inscriptions on behalf of the Philharmonic Academy of Verona and displayed them on the walls surrounding its courtyard. His stated aim was the creation of a public epigraphic museum with an educational purpose, where the inscriptions were arranged thematically to help visitors grasp the historical significance of their texts.

The proposed paper seeks to retrace the evolution of the audience for ancient inscriptions in the modern era by focusing on the early museological experiences mentioned above, which were intended to promote public engagement with inscribed monuments and an appreciation of their historical meaning.

SATURDAY 11 APRIL – SESSION 5: 11.20-13.20

PANEL 35 (Pedagogy Workshop): Classics in North-west state schools: outreach, aspiration and implementation. Venue: #tbc

Organiser: Joanne McNamara (Classics for All).

This workshop is an opportunity to showcase the growth of Classics in NW schools, and to investigate the reasons senior leaders in primary and secondary state-schools and educational trusts are choosing to put Classics and Latin onto their curricula. The workshop will therefore present and interrogate the data and decision-making processes of the educators who choose to introduce Classics and Latin, examining why they do it and what they believe it will add to or improve in their schools. Very often this provides a message of aspiration: several of the schools are in areas of deprivation or face other challenges. Presenters will also discuss more practical issues of implementation, explaining how they facilitated the introduction of Classics and Latin, and how the subject has been received by stakeholders (governors, staff, pupils, parents, etc.): we hope this will also provide guidance on implementation.

The workshop will be organised and hosted by Joanne McNamara, representing Classics for All (CFA); CFA has been instrumental in the development of four out of five of the featured projects. We therefore hope that the workshop will provide a model of Classics outreach for other regions and other interested educators. The five presentations are:

1. LATIN IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: St Catherine's Primary School, Bolton, explaining why they made the decision to teach Latin to their young pupils instead of Spanish/French.
2. CLASSICS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: Northern Schools Trust, describing their journey with introducing Classics initially as an enrichment exercise by this year as a fully-timetabled subject for all Key Stage 3 pupils at two of its secondary schools.
3. LATIN IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: Southport Learning Trust and the Latin Excellence Programme, who have introduced Latin into 6 schools through their involvement with the government sponsored Latin Excellence Programme in 2024.
4. A-LEVELS IN SIXTH-FORM COLLEGES: Carmel College, St Helens, explaining why they are part of the higher-than-average increase in Sixth-Form Colleges offering Classical Civilisation and Ancient History A-levels in the North of England.
5. GREEK ON SATURDAYS: The Liverpool Greek Academy (a CFA Project)

This project, funded by donations to Classics for All, invites state-school pupils in the Liverpool region in years 9-13 to attend Classical Greek lessons on Saturdays.

PANEL 36 (Pedagogy): Language Learning in Schools. Chair: Sharon Marshall (Exeter); venue: #tbc

John Claughton (WoLLoW, World of Languages, Languages of the World): 'WoLLoW – a new approach to primary languages, and Latin and Greek

The teaching of 'a language' in primary schools has been a legal requirement for over a decade but, as the annual Language Trends research by the British Council shows, it's not a howling success. That research shows that French and Spanish are the dominant forces, taught in nearly 97% of primary schools, whereas Latin is only taught in 1.4%. Mandarin, after massive investment over several years, is taught in 2.4% of the schools that replied to the survey. And then all pupils start all over again in Year 7.

This would suggest that there is a need for new and different approaches to the teaching of all languages in primary schools, not just classical languages, but modern languages and family/heritage languages. One such approach is WoLLoW, a free primary language programme which aims to give pupils the experience of understanding and enjoying languages they know, and languages they don't, and languages they might study at secondary school or beyond. Latin and Greek are part of this because each language shows pupils something different but not alien: a language which makes sense by word ending not word order, a language which has a different, but decipherable, alphabet, languages which provide English with words for almost everything, and every new thing. However, Latin and Greek are also set alongside the relations which the pupils might know, Punjabi – the language of the 'Land of the Five Waters' - or Urdu or Farsi or Welsh. And there are lessons on braille and sign-language and code-breaking.

The paper aims to explain the purpose, the design and the impact of this course, created by experienced teachers. It relates obviously to the theme of pedagogy but also to linking classical languages into the languages and cultures of the Middle East – and beyond.

Ashley Chhibber (Riddlesdown Collegiate, Croydon): *Strategies for learning Latin vocabulary in KS3 and KS4*

Learning the roughly 450 words on the defined vocabulary list is an essential part of preparation for the language paper worth 50% of GCSE Latin (for both Eduqas and OCR). Although most students will have encountered, and ostensibly learned, a large proportion of these words in KS3, in practice the task of learning vocabulary often needs to start almost from scratch at GCSE level – with all of the time pressures that that entails. This paper will cover a range of innovative pedagogical strategies, with practical examples and tips, which can be used to embed vocabulary knowledge for students across the attainment range. It is based on experiences at a large South London comprehensive where any student can study Latin to GCSE level regardless of prior aptitude or attainment. The strategies discussed will include: embedding a strong foundation in KS3 through tasks that build enthusiasm for learning Latin vocabulary and English derivations; the use of thematic vocabulary lists, designed according to a realistic understanding of the prior knowledge which students can be expected to bring from KS3 and integrated with the language curriculum and grammar booklets used in Year 10; regular vocabulary testing that makes use of spaced retrieval; vocabulary scaffolding (and the gradual reduction thereof) in translation tasks, including the teaching of set texts in Year 11; and the use of online

tools such as Memrise and Blooket to help students consolidate their learning. Many of these strategies will be transferable to teaching A-level Latin or Ancient Greek as well.

Vlada Oulitskaia (Claremont Fan Court School): *How can we help younger pupils access feedback in the Latin classroom?* (Lightning talk)

Based on research conducted as part of the Learning and Teaching Masters at Oxford, this lightning talk explores how younger pupils (Year 7) experience and access feedback on written Latin translation tasks.

The study identified a key tension in feedback practice: the need for feedback to be personal and dialogic - enabling teachers to answer pupils' questions in ways that promote genuine improvement - while also navigating the social discomfort pupils may feel when discussing errors face-to-face. This challenge is not limited to pupils with specific learning needs but extends to many who struggle with classroom social dynamics. This talk therefore invites discussion of **accessible feedback practices in the Latin classroom** which support all learners without creating social barriers to engagement.

The talk also invites discussion of how we can effectively implement the task-feedback-correction cycle, particularly in schools where Latin receives limited curriculum time, without sacrificing enjoyment or engagement with broader cultural context. This is especially relevant to schools where Classics may be underfunded or recently introduced.

Discussion will focus on the following questions:

- How can teachers balance efficiency with the need for personalised, dialogic feedback?
- What strategies might reduce social discomfort for pupils while still encouraging reflection and correction?
- How can feedback practices in under-resourced contexts empower pupils to make progress in Latin without sacrificing engagement?

This talk is particularly aimed at teachers working with **school-age pupils** and fits with the conference themes of pedagogy, with a particular focus on overcoming social barriers to accessing meaningful feedback.

Caitlin Casselman (Bolton School): *Getting the Most out of your Unseen: Teaching Ancient Languages*

Although Following my research which was published by the Journal of Classics Teaching in 2024 (Casselman, 2017, 'An investigation into the impact of vocabulary retrieval practice as a method of formative assessment in a Latin AS-level unseen translation context'), I would like to propose a lightning talk in the field of Classical pedagogies inviting participants to consider the utility of using 'unseens' as a mainstay of classroom teaching. This talk responds to the common problem faced by teachers of giving pupils unseens which are quickly forgotten and whose content can be opaque or mystifying. Informed by research in MFL, I have been trialling a new method of using unseen Latin and Greek translations in my own teaching, by creating curriculums in miniature designed to give unseen passages greater relevance to pupils and therefore improve vocabulary retention. My lightning talk would explore the benefits of collating unseens grouped thematically and how these might form a part of a structured programme of language learning based on topics, similar to techniques

used in MFL. I will propose ways educators at all levels could adopt a vocabulary curriculum, create impactful resources, methods of formative assessment based on unseens, and easily synthesize these into their current teaching. I will suggest that these vocabulary curriculums will make engaging with unseens in classroom routines more rewarding both for pupils and teachers. My hope is that fellow educators will help to contribute to this vision for salvaging the utility of unseens through critical discussion of these ideas and methods.

PANEL 37 (Pedagogy): Access-Centred Pedagogies. Chair: Graáinne Cassidy; venue: #tbc

Angela Nash (Cambridge Greek Academy): *The Student Experience of Online Greek Language Learning*

When This paper offers a discussion of the student experience at the Cambridge Greek Academy, an institution supported by Classics for All, the CSCP, and the University of Cambridge. It provides flexible online teaching of Ancient Greek for state school pupils, complemented by half-termly in-person sessions at the University of Cambridge's Classics Faculty.

The research is based on qualitative feedback from students enrolled in the Academy. The central aim is to evaluate the pedagogical model from the student's perspective, with a particular focus on three key areas: their general perceptions of learning Greek, the specific benefits and drawbacks of a primarily online curriculum, and the particular experiences of neurodivergent learners.

While online learning presents clear challenges, it also offers significant and often overlooked benefits, especially for neurodivergent students. The online nature fosters an environment where students with diverse learning styles can thrive. The in person sessions have created an enthusiastic community of Classics learners who greatly value not only the access to Greek teaching and University style lectures, but also the social bonds and inclusivity created.

This paper directly aligns with the conference theme of justice and access-centred pedagogy by demonstrating how an educational model can actively dismantle barriers and promote equity. The Cambridge Greek Academy's model is inherently justice-centred because it re-envisions who can study Classics and how. It creates a space where all students can not only access, but participate and excel on their own terms.

The paper highlights how the Academy provides a pathway for students who may be geographically isolated or unable to study Greek in their school. All students are from state schools, many of which offer no Classical language learning. In addition, the Academy is increasingly providing a route to University Classics courses.

Maisie Cumming and Chloe Westwood (Q3 Academy Tipton): *Making Ancient History 'for Them': Curriculum Design and Student Engagement in a Diverse School*

Designing a coherent curriculum at Key Stage 3 is crucial if students are to thrive in Ancient History GCSE, especially in schools where pupils have limited prior knowledge of the ancient world and little access to the subject. Our school serves a community with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage, with 44% of pupils classed as disadvantaged, and many pupils entering with weak literacy skills. It is also a highly multicultural and ethnically diverse school. Nationally, students from such backgrounds often feel excluded from traditional History pathways, and our aim in

developing Ancient History has been to challenge this and ensure all students feel 'seen'. Ancient History GCSE is still a niche option in many schools, and is often assumed to be viable only in selective or high-attaining contexts. In 2022, however, our department began building an Ancient History pathway. We began with a Year 9 unit on diversity in Rome, which generated enough interest to launch a GCSE cohort of 28 pupils in 2024, who will sit their first examinations in summer 2026. To support this further, our department introduced a new Year 7 unit on Ancient Mesopotamia, designed by our KS3 lead, which is already proving popular. Part of our aim in developing Ancient History was to ensure that all students see themselves reflected in the subject and feel that it is 'for them'. This experience has highlighted particular challenges for our students: limited historical vocabulary, underdeveloped source-analysis skills, and a lack of contextual knowledge beyond Greece and Rome. We have sought to tackle these issues at KS3, using targeted vocabulary teaching, transferable enquiry questions, and exposure to a wider ancient world. By teaching both Mesopotamia in Year 7 and diversity in Rome in Year 9, we have been able to reflect plural histories of the ancient world, which resonated strongly with students in our highly diverse school community. Students who might otherwise disengage from history have shown enthusiasm and confidence, with some surprising themselves by choosing Ancient History GCSE, and already showing interest in studying the subject post-16. The success of the GCSE has already sparked conversations about introducing an A-Level, raising aspirations and creating the possibility of developing future Ancient Historians. Our paper offers a case study of how ancient history can thrive in schools with varied contexts. By sharing both the successes and challenges, we hope to contribute to the wider conversation on making Ancient History accessible and sustainable in a wide range of school contexts.

Holly Mason (OU): *Classics in Youth Custody*

As a subject, Classics is not widely available in secondary schools and not available to those that are of school age and in the justice system. There is ongoing work to make these subjects available to all students, particularly those in disadvantaged areas (Classics for All, 2022), but it can be argued that those in custody are the most disadvantaged currently, as they do not have access to a curriculum wider than Maths and English. Ofsted criteria stipulates that a curriculum should be 'ambitious and opportunistic', pushing students to gain additional knowledge (Ofsted, 2023; Boyle and Charles, 2016). Furthermore, educational opportunities should not only be for all learners, regardless of setting, but inclusive. Inclusive practice in education is defined as being "successful for children with many different attributes" (Schuelka, 2018, p.2). By introducing a wider subject knowledge into the Youth Custody Estate, education providers will be better meeting the stipulated outcomes by Ofsted, of an educational environment.

Recent inspection reports of HMYOI Werrington in particularly (2025) have rated the provisions as 'inadequate' (p. 38) specifically citing that curriculums are not ambitious and do not meet the needs or interests of learners (pp. 38-39). It states that learners are not explicitly taught "about values of tolerance and respect" (p.41). Moving away from education, it notes that the safety in the establishment is 'not sufficiently good' and that children feel unsafe (p.20).

My scheme of work has addressed the above concerns by providing learners with an overview of the principles of Stoicism and encouraging them to consider how they can be beneficial to their own lives. As well as having educational benefits (as noted above), the series of lessons allowed for exploration on how education can be

used as a tool for desistance and improving behaviours in custody, directly addressing the safety concerns of children. Education is highlighted as important for individuals in being able to gain employment and consequently, is a protective factor and can reduce recidivism (Collins, 2024).

Similar schemes have been implemented in other custodial settings for adults, jointly delivered by Novus and the University of Durham. It has been reported that learners have found these "ancient lessons" relevant and applicable to "modern life" (Novus, 2025). I will be including the feedback of my lessons from learners to measure the success.

Aimee Schofield (Loughborough Grammar School; Aquila Tuition): *Ancient languages and students with literacy difficulties*

Being able to study our sources in the original language is a vital skill for the future of the scholarship of the ancient world. However, provision of ancient language teaching is increasingly under threat. Demonstrating the benefits of learning ancient languages for their own sake is becoming ever more important, and improving accessibility for learners from non-traditional backgrounds is crucial.

When we approach teaching ancient languages at school or university level, we will inevitably have students in our lessons who have a range of access needs. This may include, but is not limited to, dyslexia and other literacy difficulties. This presents teachers and lecturers with a degree of difficulty: how can we differentiate our teaching so that we support the individual learner, while also providing high quality, research backed teaching for those without literacy difficulties?

This paper aims to consider how we can use dyslexia-friendly, multisensory approaches to teaching and learning at both school and university level to support high quality outcomes for learners both with and without literacy difficulties. It will show how an awareness of literacy development from early years teaching through to learners' experiences at secondary level can support teachers in both the classroom and lecture theatre to make their teaching as effective as possible. It will also make some suggestions as to how the teaching of ancient languages can be used to support literacy development across the wider curriculum at school level and help students at tertiary level to enrich their studies of the Classical World.

PANEL 38 Archaeology in Greece: Recent Fieldwork Projects at the British School at Athens. Chair: Rachel Phillips (British School at Athens); venue: #tbc

This panel offers an overview of current archaeological research in Greece, through the lens of recent fieldwork projects of the British School at Athens (BSA). It comprises six 15-minute presentations that discuss the aims and results of current excavation and survey projects run under the auspices of the BSA (see below for abstracts). These projects, which span the Neolithic to the Byzantine periods, provide important new perspectives on the social and material histories of Greece. The presentations summarise key developments and discoveries of recent years, and so showcase the variety, scale, and innovation of current archaeological work.

First, the Toumba Serron project presents results from the excavation of a Late Neolithic settlement in the Strymon valley in Greek Macedonia. The excavation has uncovered substantial remains of ceramic and lithic industries at the site, as well as two Final Neolithic burials. It has also examined the impact of environmental change on agriculture practices at the transition from the Late to the Final Neolithic. Next, the

Keros Project reports on the start of a new excavation cycle in 2025. Work so far has revealed a previously unknown picture of long-term habitation on Keros and Dhaskalio, pushing our understanding of these islands back into the fourth millennium BCE and forward into the second millennium BCE.

The third presentation introduces ARTEMIS, a new survey project that focuses on the ancient Greek countryside in eastern Attica. In its examination of the relations between people, landscape, and environment, the project prioritises rural community-centred narratives over the urban elite narratives that often dominate studies of Greek antiquity. Next, the West Area of Samos Archaeological Project (WASAP) presents results from the survey of the southern area of the island. The analysis of ceramic finds (dated from the Archaic through to the Byzantine eras) has provided insights into the economy of the island, with particular focus on local modes of production and indirect trade contacts.

The fifth presentation reports on current work at Knossos, the site of major BSA excavations since 1900 and now the location of a new project aimed at uncovering Roman-era remains. In 2025, the Roman Knossos project undertook geophysical survey to examine the landscape at the site, its relationship with the broader province, and the delineation of different kinds of spaces in the Roman town. Finally, the Kato Choria project reports on the recent excavation of a Byzantine settlement in the south-central area of Naxos. In a period that sees extensive social transformation, new excavation evidence (in tandem with earlier surveys and environmental data) has the potential to address important questions about identity, innovation, and resilience.

Taken together, these six projects draw out several key themes for the study of the ancient material world. Each presentation emphasises the relations between humans and their environments, the various ways that people used and understood the landscapes around them over time. In this sense, the panel fits well with the conference theme: environment, resources, and the ancient world. These projects also emphasise the relations between individuals and their communities, as well as the place of these communities within the broader Mediterranean world. They therefore illuminate important aspects of past identities and societies across the span of Greek history. Finally, the presentations emphasise the role of technological innovation in both the past and the present. They highlight the material creativity and industry of people in the past but also make use of innovative methods and techniques in their 2recovery of the ancient evidence, such as the use of palaeoenvironmental reconstruction and palaeoclimatic analysis (ARTEMIS) and ethnographic research (Toumba Serron).

James Taylor (York): *Excavations of a Neolithic Village at Toumba Serron, Northern Greece, between 2021 & 2025*

The Toumba Serron project in Greek Macedonia is a multidisciplinary international research initiative dedicated to exploring a previously unstudied area of the southern Balkans. The site, situated near a former palaeo-lake in the Strymon valley, preserves substantial Late Neolithic remains. Core sampling and magnetometric surveys have confirmed at least two distinct periods of occupation between 5500 and 4000 BC (LNI & LNII), with traces of domestic structures, enclosures, and a monumental mud-brick wall nearly 900 metres long, probably dating to LNI. Excavations have revealed classic lithic industries with materials sourced from northern regions, as well as an exceptionally rich production and circulation of decorated pottery, including canonical forms and surface treatments of both LNI and LNII. The discovery of kilns and

associated deposits on site further confirms this intensity of ceramic activity. Notably, two burials dating to the Final Neolithic were uncovered just outside the settlement. Despite significant environmental changes during the Late Neolithic, evidence points to the continuation of agriculture into the Final Neolithic. Paradoxically, this continuity coincides with the definitive abandonment of many Late Neolithic sites in the region—including Toumba Serron—a process potentially linked to rising water levels.

Beyond archaeology, the project has embraced community-based and artistic approaches. Ethnographic research has documented local social dynamics, and collective memory of the lake (drained in the 1940s to combat malaria and expand farmland). Collaborative artistic initiatives include theatrical performances, exhibitions, soundscapes, and creative reinterpretations such as tarot cards and embroidered installations, all fostering dialogue between past and present. These efforts deliberately counteract extractivist and colonial practices often associated with foreign-led excavations by embedding the project within local life.

Sustainable excavation practices—such as minimising waste and planning for open data dissemination—are central to the project's philosophy, though challenges remain due to restrictive national legislation.

Affiliated authors: Nicolas Zorzin (Panthéon-Sorbonne) and Dimitra Malamidou (Ephorate of Antiquities of Serres)

Michael J. Boyd (BSA/Cambridge/Cyprus Institute): *The Keros Project: new investigations in the light of twenty years of fieldwork*

Intensive and extensive fieldwork centred on the Aegean island of Keros over the past two decades has had a number of remarkable results. Keros itself has been transformed from an 'island of mystery', often cited in support of quite different hypotheses, to one of the best known and published sites in the Aegean islands, one which now drives the interpretation of the wider prehistoric Cyclades. Each new 3 phase of fieldwork has supported differing fields of vision: Aegean connectivity and ritual from the earlier excavations, maritime territories and scales of action from the surveys, and early processes of urbanisation and centralisation from the more recent excavations.

The BSA, in collaboration with the Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades and in partnership with The Cyprus Institute, began a new cycle of excavation in 2025. We present here the background to the new project, the research questions arising directly from the previous work which made new fieldwork imperative, and the first results of the 2025 excavations. These include our investigations of the architectural subsystem on Dhaskalio, new insights into the earliest periods of habitation on Keros, predating the Kavos sanctuary by at least half a millennium, and significant new results from the second millennium BCE, a period of interaction first with Santorini and perhaps Crete, and later with the Mycenaean mainland. We also discuss the later period on Dhaskalio when a chapel was constructed and used in the first millennium CE. The paper will present a first integration of these results with the emergent picture of Keros through time.

Affiliated authors: Evi Margaritis (Cyprus Institute), Demetris Athanasoulis (Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades)

Maeve McHugh (Birmingham): *Introducing ARTEMIS: Attica Regional inTegrated Environmental and Material Survey*

This paper introduces ARTEMIS, a new *synergesia* with the Ephorate of Antiquities of Eastern Attica project designed to investigate the long-term relationship between people, landscapes, and environments in a region of major historical and cultural significance. ARTEMIS aims to uncover the untold stories of ancient Greek communities, shifting the focus from cities to the countryside by generating an integrated human-environment narrative that brings the rural heart of ancient Greece to light. It places rural communities at the forefront of a re-telling of the past, focusing on their relationships with dynamic environments and changing climate.

Traditional interpretations of Greek antiquity are dominated by elite narratives reflecting urban attitudes and scholarly discourse that quantifies rural economic capacity or social structures. Such accounts provide only a partial view of ancient life because, in all periods, most people lived in agrarian, rural settings where interactions with the surrounding landscape profoundly influenced their lives. This project will break down traditional urban-rural frames of reference in favour of a rural-urban blended community-focused narrative of everyday life.

ARTEMIS addresses this challenge by applying a novel integrated methodology that includes archaeological survey, palaeoenvironmental reconstruction and palaeoclimatic analysis to the region of eastern Attica. With its rich archaeological record and distinctive landscapes including fertile lowlands and wetlands, this region provides a unique setting in which to assess the relationships between cultural practices and environmental conditions. The presentation will outline our research questions and discuss our methodological innovation through the true integration of two complementary datasets.

Affiliated authors: Eleni Andrikou (Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports), Michelle Farrell (Coventry), Henry Chapman (Birmingham)

Michael Loy (Durham): *The West Area of Samos Archaeological Project: results from south-west Samos*

The West Area of Samos Archaeological Project (WASAP) conducted fieldwork over four years (2021-4), with the aim of investigating the western portion of the island of Samos. This presentation discusses the results of the work undertaken in the southern part of the WASAP study area. Fieldwork in this area was focused on the plain of Marathokampos, and areas of the southern coastline between Koumeiika in the east and Limnionas in the west.

High densities of Byzantine-period ceramics in the landscape around Kampos village are indicative of a substantial post-Christian settlement, while quantities of Archaic–Hellenistic amphoras found near the village of Velanidia suggest that the area was involved for the first millennium BCE in agriculture and shipping. Study of the pottery typology reveals the surprising picture of a mostly inwards looking island economy. Through the ages the assemblage is by far dominated by local productions and the very few long-distance imports reflect more indirect trade contacts as an actively maintained, extensive trade network.

Affiliated authors: Anastasia Christofilopoulou (Boston MFA), Sabine Huy (Münster), Naoíse Mac Sweeney (Vienna), Jana Mokrišová (Brown)

Dan Stewart (Leicester): *Picking at the Thread of Roman Knossos*

Arthur Evans casts a long shadow; his uncovering of Minoan remains at Knossos often occludes its later post-Minoan occupation. While major excavations and

publications under the auspices of the British School at Athens have documented components of the long post-prehistoric occupation, significantly less attention has been given to the not inconsiderable remains of Roman Knossos.

Much of the current understanding of Roman Knossos is built upon incompletely published excavations at the Villa Dionysus (Hayes 1983; Paton 1998, 2022) and 'Unexplored Mansion' (Sackett et al. 1992). More recently, rescue excavations have provided further insight into keyholes in the urban fabric of the Roman era site (Sweetman and Grigoropoulous 2010). While these publications provide knowledge of local ceramic sequences and specific structures, they provide no information regarding the broader topography of the inhabited landscapes, the relationship(s) between public, private and religious spaces, the nature of occupation within the valley as a whole, nor the place of Knossos within the province. This paper will describe the initial results of the 2025 Roman Knossos Project, led by Professor Rebecca Sweetman and Dr Dan Stewart, which aims to unite the disparate elements of Roman Knossos and serve as a test-bed for innovative archaeological practice in Greece.

Affiliated author: Rebecca Sweetman (BSA)

Mark Jackson (Newcastle): *Excavations at Kato Choria, Naxos, Greece*

Lying in the south-central area of Naxos, the largest island in the Cyclades, Kato Choria (a.k.a. Palaeoglises) is the local name for the dispersed ruined settlement that in the shelter of the western slope of the Byzantine fortress at Kastro Apalirou which was founded in the 7th century AD. Dated to the 7th-12th centuries AD, the paucity of knowledge of this period makes the excavation of Kato Choria an exceptionally important case study for understanding settlement and society across the Cyclades and beyond. The project is a *synergasia* between the Ephorate for the Cyclades and the British School at Athens, carried out by staff and students from the Universities of Edinburgh and Newcastle. Excavation took place for three weeks in October-November 2024. Key objectives are to establish the relationship of Kato Choria with Kastro Apalirou and to provide important new evidence for understanding Byzantine settlement, housing and lifeways in the Cyclades between the 7th and 11th centuries AD. In 2024 we sought to build on earlier work by the Aparlirou Environs Survey Project by excavating buildings in two parts of the site. Kato Choria offers one of the first opportunities to consider houses from the period. By focussing on the settlement outside the major (new) fortified settlements as at Kastro Apalirou, the excavation of finds and environmental data from Kato Choria will enable us to consider questions of identity, innovation, environmental adaptation and resilience at a strategic point in the Cyclades during a period of significant change.

Affiliated authors: Jim Crow (Edinburgh University) and Demetrios Athanasoulis (Ephorate of Antiquities of Cyclades)

PANEL 39: tbc

tbc

PANEL 40: Queer 5: Gendered Spaces. Chair: Julene Abad Del Vecchio; venue: #tbc

Lucrezia Sperindio (London): *Deviant puellae in Horace and Propertius*

This paper examines the characterisation of lyric and elegiac puellae as deviae – either 'remote, secluded' (*OLD* 1) or 'wandering off, deviant' (*OLD* 2) - in Propertius'

elegy 2.19 and Horace's ode 2.11. I argue that this spatial deviation may be interpreted in metapoetic terms and align these puellae with the male poet's own anti-normative agency. These women appear as either isolated, away from civilised gatherings (Prop. 2.19) or moving about (Hor. *Carm*. 2.11). In either case, they elude the attention and desire of the male poet amator. I suggest that this deviant orientation (de-vius, "off the road") resonates poetically, recalling traditional metaphors of poetic novelty (e.g., Callimachus *Aetia* fr. 1.25 Pf.) and the poet's own self-representation as a wandering
or remote figure (e.g., Hor. *Carm*. 3.25.12; Prop. 3.16.28). When both poet, as subject of poetry, and puella, as its object, occupy this deviant space, the result is a shared centrifugal movement that destabilises normative boundaries of geography, gender, and, ultimately, poetic agency. While scholars have tended to explore the oppositional and hierarchical side of the poet-puella relationship in lyric and elegy, in this paper I question the nature of poetic agency within Horatian lyric and Propertian elegy, as I investigate a more fluid, and 'queer', understanding of it. Drawing on Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology*, I argue that the deviance of poet and puella jointly reorients poetic agency, revealing its centrifugal, anti-normative force.

Lethe-Medea Dickinson (Lancaster): *Gendered Spheres and Mythic Convention in Euripides' Medea*

This paper explores how Euripides' *Medea* subverts and adheres to roles and stereotypes connected to contemporary Athenian and mythological women. By examining this text's context of contemporary Classical Athenian society with Jürgen Habermas' public/private spheres and by placing the play in its mythological context, this paper offers a queered reading of Medea's character.

The first part of this paper assesses various aspects of marriage from an Athenian perspective, analysing the titular character Medea in comparison with Classical society as a foreign woman with a failing marriage and greater aspirations. The second part focuses on mythology by focusing on ideals in Greek mythology and literature such as *metis* and *kleos* to situate Medea in the mythic context and consider how Medea both adheres to feminine roles and reflects male heroes such as Achilles or the Sophoclean Ajax. This queers Medea from standard Athenian womanhood. The third part combines Classical society's gendered spheres and mythic convention to consider how Medea's maternal love and the filicide she commits juxtapose in her 'victory' over Jason, queering motherhood through her 'heroic' motivations.

In exploring how Medea subverts and adheres to many expectations of women from a gender studies perspective, this paper offers a re-examination of a mythic figure that has often been read and re-produced from surface level and misogynistic readings of intense jealousy. On the surface she is presented as vicious and jealous and the reactionary response to her crimes have often led to her motivations and words being overlooked and ignored. The presentation will conclude that Medea typically disregards cultural female roles and stereotypes. Medea only utilises female attributes for her own gain because she places higher regard on stereotypically masculine ideals such as honour and vengeance.

Melanie Racette-Campbell (University of Winnipeg): *Cicero's Enemies Acting Up in the Forum*

Cicero's works have been a source for the study of Roman masculinity (e.g., McDonnell 2006 and Goldberg 2021) and have also featured in the classical version of the spatial turn (e.g., Leen 2000 and McIntosh 2013; for an overview of the spatial

turn, see Kümin and Usborne 2013). I connect these two areas of study to examine how Cicero uses locations as part of his commentary on men's masculinity. The combination of the ways that men act and the places in which they perform their actions can reinforce or detract from their performance of masculinity.

This paper is a test case examining how Cicero's enemies act in the forum, using one example for each of Verres, Antony, and Clodius. These men were of a class expected to use leadership roles in the forum as part of their performance of adult Roman masculinity. However, they all fail in some way: by performing the wrong kind of action for the place, as when Antony uses the threat of military force against the senate (*Philippic* 2.112); by taking the correct actions but perverting them, as when Verres (dis)honours the comitium with his ill-gotten booty (*In Verrem* 2.1.58); or by using their public standing to act in an unmanly way, as when Clodius was acting like a *scortum populare* at the height of his power (*De Domo Sua* 49).

This test case is the first step in a project examining how Cicero uses the city of Rome to construct and critique masculinity, both his own and that of other Roman men. By beginning with men who are highly visible in the historical record and with an area of Rome that is both well-documented and well-excavated, I create parameters for my study from which I can expand to other men in other locations.

PANEL 41 Inscriptions and their Audiences 2. Chair: *tbc; venue: #tbc

Michael Beer (Exeter/OU): *What is IMP? TP? COS? These aren't words! I don't understand this at all!' Who exactly understood public inscriptions in the Roman world?*

The inscriptions of antiquity are a valuable source of information for the historian of the ancient world, and allows to accurately date events, the construction and opening of public buildings and to gain biographical information about individuals who do not feature in the literary sources. Moreover, they allow us to find out what was felt worthy of commemoration, be that a military victory, the issuing of a law or the celebration of a particular ruler. If we include coins in our definition of an inscription, then inscriptions could potentially be seen by many people over a potentially wide geographical area. Sometimes these words were accompanied by images (as with coinage) and sometimes not.

Who were these inscriptions aimed at? If we accept a high level of illiteracy in antiquity (certainly varying over time and according to geographical context), how many people would be able to read them? Do accompanying images clarify text that cannot be read? The varying quality of images on coinage (as well as what they were meany to symbolise) can sometimes prove baffling to modern audiences and may have been so to those in antiquity. The title of the paper makes reference to the abbreviations that appear on Roman coinage, and this also translates into the format of texts on public inscriptions. Did people understand these abbreviations? Do they even read them? And who ever read the inscriptions at the top of victory arches? This paper will also consider to what extent the language of inscriptions could be used not just as a tool of oppression but also as one of inclusion, for example bi- and trilingualism in inscriptions, in particular that of Cornelius Gallus in Egypt (an inscription in Egyptian hieroglyphs, Latin and Greek).

Christian Bot (Independent Researcher): *Inscribe et Impera*: Inscribed treaties in the fifth-century *archē* and Athenian power projection

The importance of the Athenian Acropolis as the focus of Athenian epigraphic culture in the second half of the fifth century BCE has been copiously emphasized in modern scholarship (e.g., Trampedach 2022; Liddel 2003). However, the display of Athenian-commissioned inscriptions in the wider Athenian *archē*, particularly those governing Athens' relations with its allies (so-called 'regulatory decrees'), has been rather less intensely studied.

My conference paper examines the practice by which Athens frequently required copies of regulatory decrees to be erected in the territory of the ally or allies concerned. Known examples include the Athenian decrees for Chalcis (*IG* 1^3 40 = OR 131), the Bottiaei (*IG* 1^3 76), Selymbria (*IG* 1^3 118 = OR 185), and the empire-wide Measures Decree (*IG* 1^3 1453 = OR 155).

Using the insights of power projection theory from the field of International Relations, I argue that the Athenian 'epigraphic habit' as applied to the subjects of Athens' *archē* served primarily to visually reinforce political and military supremacy of the hegemon and to discourage allied resistance. As Leah Lazar correctly observes in the context of inscriptions displayed in Athens itself, 'Public inscription was an effective means of asserting and monumentalizing Athenian power' (Lazar 2024, 148). I demonstrate that this remained equally true when applied to Athenian inscriptions abroad.

Luca Raggiunti (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia): Language on Display: Dative Plural Variation and Audience in Early Greek Inscriptions.

This paper investigates the alternation of Dative plural endings (namely -οις, -ῃς/-αις as opposed to -οισι/-ῃσι) in Greek inscriptions dated not later than the 5th century BC. This morphologic phenomenon has been considered by philologists and linguists primarily in connection with the language of archaic epic poetry (see e.g. Janko 1982, 54-57 and, more recently, Raggiunti 2022) – especially Homer and, to a lesser extent, Hesiod. Nevertheless, the epigraphic evidence, although discussed in general terms and with regard to the overall dialectal distribution of the two sets of endings (see e.g. Ruijgh 1958 and Lazzeroni 1968), still deserves closer and more detailed examination.

Focusing on both prose and verse inscriptions, this paper examines selected cases to show how Dative forms – together with additional material factors – can adapt to different contexts, thus further highlighting the interplay between regional variation and the texts' public dimension.

As for Dative endings in prose inscriptions, while traditional scholarship tends to classify them according to rigid dialectal boundaries, traces of slightly more fluidity can also be observed. I argue that it may depend on the specific audience for such inscriptions. Verse inscriptions present different challenges. In fact, given the decisive presence of the metrical constraint, purely dialectological assessments carry less weight. Yet, at least in these cases, the material evidence (e.g. the shape of the letters) can help reveal features of particular interest for a broader understanding of the texts, from which a negotiation between linguistic identity and the audience still emerges. Through this lens, morphology, alphabet, and the public itself are not separate factors but interdependent elements shaping the communicative impact of Greek inscriptions.

PANEL 42: Commemoration 4: Commemorating the Dead in Ancient Literature. Chair: Manos Tsakiris (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Naoko Yamagata (OU): *Aristophanes' Frogs as an Answer to Homer's Hades*

The *Frogs* was performed at the Lenaean Festival in 405 BCE when Aristophanes had the hard task of cheering up his Athenian audience amid the grim situation of their polis, suffering from and divided by the prolonged war. They had victory at the Battle of Arginusae in the year before, but it was marred by the prosecution of the victorious generals due to their failure to rescue the survivors from broken ships, and the final defeat of Athens was to come later in the same year at the Battle of Aegospotami. Moreover, their favourite tragedians, Euripides and Sophocles, had just died. In the Greek imagination and particularly in the war-torn Athens, Homer's images of war and death must have been casting a long shadow over them. As Plato later complained in his dialogue *Republic* (Book II 386c) some passages in Homer, especially those describing the underworld, were felt to be frightening and demoralising to citizen soldiers. To cheer up his Athenian audience, Aristophanes had to counteract the shadow of Homer. He draws not only on the belief in the Mystery cult that offers happier afterlife than what Homer's poems afforded, but also parodies the images of Homer's underworld, including those of the king and queen of the underworld, Hades and Persephone, themselves. Although the contest between Aeschylus and Euripides in the *Frogs* ends in the victory of the former who represents the more serious and warlike side of Homeric tradition, by making his audience laugh at Homer's Hades, Aristophanes was helping them laugh away the darkness of death, albeit for the brief hours of comic performance.

Anton Glüer (Würzburg): *Individual Paper: Blaming the Dead – A Rhetorical Strategy in Greek Epic and Tragedy*

Numerous studies have examined how the dead and ancestors are honoured in Greek epic and tragedy, and how they continue to exercise power from beyond the grave. This paper proposes a perspective on the commemoration of the dead that has so far received little attention: the blaming of the dead for misfortunes in the present. Although such a practice may at first seem morally dubious and not in keeping with the usual communicative aims of praise/blame discourse, it can, for a number of reasons, be a useful strategy:

1) Assertion of moral norms: The blaming of the dead can be understood as a "form of negotiating moral norms" (A. Jefferson, Blaming the Dead, European Journal of Philosophy 32, 2024, p. 557). Penelope (Od. 23.67–68) and Laertes (Od. 24.351–52) both blame the slain suitors themselves for their deaths, thereby expressing the view that the violation of the laws of hospitality is an offence which the gods punish with death in order to uphold the moral norm.

2) Framing of the present: The restriction of perspective to a particular causal point of origin can cast a present negative consequence in a different light and, for instance, make one's own actions appear justified. In Aeschylus' Agamemnon, Clytaemnestra blames her slain husband for his death (1397–98), while Aegisthus justifies his own involvement by appealing to the guilt of Agamemnon's father Atreus against his own father Thyestes (1582–1604).

3) Self-protection in present conflicts: Particularly vulnerable characters, or those in precarious situations – for example women or the elderly – may adopt the strategy of holding a long-dead person responsible in order to avoid making enemies in the present. Thus, the women left behind in Iolcus at the beginning of Apollonius' Argonautica do not blame the immediately responsible King Pelias for Jason's

dangerous journey, but instead reach far back to the original tale of the Golden Fleece involving Phrixus and Helle (1.256–259).

Maria-Agori Gravvanni (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens): *Lamenting the Lost: Male Responses to Female Death in Ancient Greek Drama (Eur. Alc., Eur. Hip.)*

The lament is an expression of human pain and follows the occurrence of unpleasant and terrible events in daily life, which bring about a drastic change in the life and reality of the people experiencing them. In Ancient Greek Tragedy, lamenting is an integral part of expressing human devastation, with the expression of female lament being more common. However, in the tragedies *Alcestis* and *Hippolytus* by Euripides, lamenting appears not to be exclusively a female matter. Both Theseus and Admetus, despite their royal status, do not hesitate to mourn due to the death of their beloved wives. The purpose of this presentation is to analyze male lamenting in the two tragedies and to present the psychological profile of the two heroes following the loss they experienced.

Vera Obeng: *Household authority and the fate of newborns: Reconsidering Infant Exposure in Classical Athens.*

This paper revisits the contentious practice of infant exposure in Classical Athens, focusing on the role of the household authority in shaping decisions about the fate of newborns. Infant exposure, though morally complex by modern standards, was a socially and legally accepted practice in ancient Greek society, often employed to regulate household size, preserve lineage, and manage economic resources. Far from being a purely economic or demographic measure, exposure functioned within a framework of patriarchal power, where the *kyrios* – the male head of the household – had absolute control over family composition and determining the fate of newborns. He had the legal authority to accept or reject a newborn, reflecting the patriarchal structure of Athenian society and the central importance of maintaining the integrity and continuity of the *oikos*. Drawing on literary, legal, and philosophical sources, including the works of Aristotle, the study explores how exposure reflected societal values around gender, legitimacy, and religious purity. By reconsidering this practice, the paper highlights how private domestic decisions were deeply entwined with public ideologies and moral discourse in the Athenian *polis*. This paper argues that the decision to expose an infant was not merely practical, but also symbolic, reinforcing patriarchal control and reflecting broader cultural attitudes toward gender, legitimacy, and religious belief as aforementioned. Ultimately, this reconsideration underscores the pivotal role of household authority in shaping the most intimate and consequential aspects of life and death in the ancient *polis*. It reveals the intersection of private household governance with broader civic and philosophical ideals about citizenship, family and societal order in Classical Athens.

PANEL 43: tbc

tbc

SATURDAY 11 April - SESSION 6: 14.10-16.10

PANEL 44 (Pedagogy Workshop): Roman Arithmetic Workshop. Chair: tbc; venue: #tbc

Organiser: Philomen Probert (Oxford)

This interactive workshop will give participants the chance to learn to do simple and not-so-simple calculations in ways consistent with our evidence for Roman arithmetic, using counters on a counting board. The workshop is aimed particularly at schoolteachers and others who would like to be able to try out Roman arithmetic with their own pupils, but it is open to all. Feedback at Reading Ancient Schoolroom events suggests that Roman arithmetic often engages people who normally dislike arithmetic, and thus has the potential to help improve children's numeracy skills.

We will start with a brief explanation of the surviving evidence for Roman arithmetic. Participants will then be issued with counting boards and counters (which they will be able to keep), and we will work our way through problems using these tools. The following plan will be roughly adhered to, but may be tweaked depending on participants' interests:

(a) adding
(b) subtracting
(c) multiplying (basic method + possible short-cuts)
(d) dividing: basic method, giving a whole number plus a remainder if need be
(e) interest rates—and replicating a result of Columella's
(f) fractions

- fractions Romans used
- dividing: when more accuracy is needed than 'and a remainder'…

Participants will be encouraged to request calculations they would like to do. The workshop will be informed by scholarship (some bibliography will be provided), and by experimentation I have conducted along with colleagues in the Reading Ancient Schoolroom team. Because of the practical nature of this workshop, in-person attendance is strongly recommended.

PANEL 45: *Misperception, Illusions, and Hallucinations from Gilgamesh to Plato*. Organisers: Matilde Berti (Durham) and Jurgen R. Gatt (Malta). Chair: tbc; venue: #tbc)

This panel focuses on the limits of perceptual knowledge and the role of misperception in early Greek literature. Episodes of deception in archaic and classical texts have long attracted scholarly attention, but studies have tended to concentrate on the active role of the deceiver (e.g., Pucci 1987; Peradotto 1990) or the symptoms of deception (e.g., Juoanna 2012; Most 2012; Thumiger 2017), rather than on the conditions that render the perceiver susceptible to error. Our focus is on the epistemic status of "the deceived" and on what these figures reveal about the limits of perception and self-knowledge. The papers in this panel offer complementary perspectives on misperception as a structural and narrative device. Together they investigate the epistemic, rhetorical, farcical, and dramatic potential of being deceived, whether by sight, sound, or self-generated illusion. By shifting attention from the agent of deception to the perceiving subject, we aim to show how early

Greek texts probe the instability of perception, articulating a more complex and less "naïve" view of knowledge than is traditionally assumed.

Scholars of ancient epistemology have often insisted that "to know" was "to see" and "to experience for oneself." Developed under the influence of Snell's analysis of the verbs of knowing (e.g., Snell 1953), this view remains influential today (e.g., Brunschwig & Lloyd 2000; Wians 2019). The senses, of course, admit of gradations. Eurycleia, when pressed for her knowledge of the suitors' death, acknowledges that she has only heard and not seen (*Od*. 23.78–80). Even within the realm of vision, von Fritz (1943) showed that Homer already acknowledged degrees of visual knowledge. Nonetheless, it is widely assumed, as Marincola (1997) does, that early Greek literature held a relatively unsophisticated view of perceptual knowledge. Yet Snell's views have increasingly been called into question (e.g., Heitsch 1966; Hussey 1991). Lesher (1981), in particular, argued that sensory perception was considered neither necessary nor sufficient for knowledge in Homer. He further demonstrated that the Odyssey opens a gap between the data of perception and the fact itself, foregrounding the risk of error and the fallibility of the senses. Sense-perception, and hearing especially, becomes a means by which one may be led astray.

This panel takes up Lesher's point on the insufficiency of perception and develops it further: we aim to examine cases in Greek literature where perception itself becomes the very condition of the subject's error. Our purpose is not only to highlight the epistemic vulnerability of perceivers but also to explore how narratives exploit misperception for thematic and dramatic effect. While individual studies have examined aspects of this theme (e.g., Hooker 1988 on Homer; Lateiner 1990 and Miltsios 2023 on Herodotus; Thumiger 2017 on the Hippocratic Corpus), little attempt has been made to bring these traditions into dialogue. Taken together, the papers in this panel trace a cross-genre and comparative history of misperception in early Greek thought, highlighting its role in shaping ideas of error, deception, and the precariousness of human perception. This perspective not only enriches our understanding of early Greek thought but also resonates with contemporary debates in philosophy, cognitive science, and the study of narrative.

Matilde Berti (Durham): *Parmenides on the Deceptive and Non-Deceptive Aspects of Sense-Perception*

In Parmenides' poem, knowing What-Is depends on the knower's ability to grasp the Goddess' revelation. In this respect, Parmenides' account of knowledge remains rooted in Epic tradition (Robbiano 2006, Tor 2017), where mortals can know like the gods through forms of revelation that rely on sense-perception (e.g., Hom., *Od*. 20.345–68, see Sullivan 1988). On the basis of a certain reading of B7 DK, scholars have posited that Parmenides' means to know What-Is must reject sense-perception to be successful (Lesher 1984, Kurfess 2011). However, this view contrasts with the pivotal role sense-perception plays in the second part of the poem dealing with the phenomena, whose importance for Parmenides is now acknowledged (e.g., Tor 2017, Mansfeld 2021). Furthermore, as has been noted, Parmenides' criticism of sense-perception is not directed at sense-perception as such, but at the habitual way mortals employ it to know (eg., Laks 1990, Bryan 2025).

While valuable, these results remain insufficient to explain the precise functions and limits of sense-perception in Parmenides. By comparing Parmenides' epistemological strategies in both parts of the poem (B4, B6, B7, B8, B8, B10 DK) with Homeric accounts of knowledge acquisition through sense-perception (e.g.,

Hom., *Od.* 12.16–58, 19.215–249, 21.113–35, *Il.* 2.484–492), whether by divine revelation or trial (*peiraō*), this paper has two aims: **(i)** to clarify which uses of sense-perception Parmenides may consider deceptive, and why; **(ii)** to identify the forms of sense-perception that are non-deceptive, and show how these provide the basis for epistemological strategies that enable the knower both to produce a plausible (*eoikota*) account (B8.60–1 DK) of the phenomena and to know the truth about What-Is.

Giulia Bernardini (Durham): *Self-Misperception as a Trigger for Laughter in Plato and Comedy*

One form of misperception is the tendency of individuals to fail to perceive themselves accurately. In Plato's *Philebus* (48–50), Socrates describes this phenomenon as the root of laughter in comedy and everyday life. Those who mistakenly believe themselves to be richer, stronger, more beautiful or wiser than they truly are exhibit a kind of ignorance that goes against the Delphic maxim '*gnothi seauton*' ('know yourself'). According to Plato, laughter arises when this self-ignorance is exposed. While this passage is often interpreted as a theoretical description of the impostor scenes typical of Old Comedy, I argue that it instead illuminates a different figure—the self-impostor—and offers an even more effective framework for understanding the comic mechanisms of New Comedy, especially in the works of Menander.

Menander's plays repeatedly feature characters with distorted self-perceptions of the world and their place within it. These figures echo Plato's 'impostors' by displaying inflated self-images that are gradually dismantled over the course of the plot. The audience laughs not only at the moment of exposure, but also in anticipation of the unveiling of their self-deception. This structural device sustains comic tension throughout the play.

This paper focuses on two case studies — Moschion in *Perikeiromene* and Charisius in *Epitrepontes* — to demonstrate how Menander adapts and dramatises the Platonic mechanism of laughter. By examining these comedies alongside Plato's *Philebus* and his earlier dialogues, I argue that Menander's comedic style may have been influenced by Platonic reflections on self-ignorance. More broadly, this analysis reveals the intersection between philosophical discourse and dramatic representation during the transition from Old to New Comedy. It demonstrates how Platonic theory can shed light on Menander's dramatic techniques and how Menander, in turn, provides a dramatic embodiment of Platonic ideas.

Jurgen R. Gatt (Malta): *Deception and the Problem of Other Minds in Herodotus' Histories*

The figure of the deceived occupies a central place in Greek literature, where the limits of knowledge are often revealed less by the cleverness of the deceiver than by the vulnerability of the one misled. Herodotus offers particularly rich material for this theme (see esp. Lateiner, 1990; Miltsios 2023): again and again his *Histories* show human beings struggling to grasp the minds, motives, and nomoi of others. In this paper, I narrow the focus to cases of deception and misperception in ethnographic and political interaction, contexts in which epistemic opacity between different peoples or rivals makes these phenomena particularly revealing.

Misperception arises when cultural codes are opaque, as when the Ethiopian King sees through Cambyses' intentions but misinterprets the Persians' golden chains as shackles (Hdt. 3.20–24), or when Greek tourists attribute the smallest pyramid of

Giza to Rhodopis (Hdt. 2.134–135). One can also deceive oneself about one's own ethnos, as when the Egyptians convinced themselves that they were the oldest race (Hdt. 2.2). Political actors likewise falter when faced with the unknowable intentions of rivals: the conquest of Babylon (Hdt. 1.191) turns on ruse, while Peisistratus' rise to power is staged through successive deceptions (first against the Alcmaeonids, then against the city) capped by violence (Hdt. 1.59–64). Croesus, too, acknowledges that alliances can be forged by *dolos* and *apatē* (1.69). In each case, the absence of transparent access to another's mind or culture creates the precondition for deception, while also exposing the limits of perception and human *súnēsis*. Herodotus also thematizes deception and misperception within *historiē* itself. Psammetichus' experiment on infant language (2.2), Herodotus' reports of the Nile (2.5), and Croesus' testing of the oracles (1.46–56) all show inquiry producing genuine perception yet leading to false conclusions. These episodes suggest that misperception is not ignorance but error born of perception itself, and that even the historian's own inquiries are vulnerable to the same distortions.

Herodotus' *Histories* thus show that both misperception and deception are structural conditions of cross-cultural and inter-political relations, and that the deceived, far from being passive, are central to his exploration of the fragility of knowledge and the problem of knowing the other.

Elena Limongelli (Oxford): *Illusions of Immortality from Uruk to Troy*

The striking similarities between Gilgameš and Achilles have captured scholarly interest for decades: both are sons of a goddess and a hero, both have an exuberant, even supernatural, nature, both have an intimate bond with their companions, Enkidu and Patroclus, and, in mourning their loss, both become dangerously close to death. This paper explores the similar way in which the texts use the language of the embodied mind to 'deceive' their audiences.

In the two epics, the heroes have an aura of untouchability; however, their companions' death signals the moment in which such illusion comes crashing down, and the heroes are left to deal with the tragic and human side of their complex nature which, up until then, had been no more than an afterthought.

The descriptions of the heroes' interiority underscore such watershed moments. Before Enkidu's death, both Gilgameš's and Enkidu's psyche resembles that of the gods, giving the impression that they too are divine. At the very moment in which Enkidu is taking his final breaths, something changes; the heroes' interiority takes on a drastically different character, highlighting their mortality and shattering the illusion of their divinity.

Achilles, though temporarily retired from the battlefield, remains a fierce warrior with a complex system of psychological entities articulating his thoughts and feelings. However, when he hears of Patroclus' death, the narrator briefly pauses the descriptions of the hero's interiority – as if such interiority had already 'flown away'.

The paper sheds light on a rhetorical device which has not yet received enough attention – the manipulation of the character's psychological entities to convey a certain message. In different ways, the poets of Gilgameš and the Iliad tweak the heroes' interiorities to give an illusion of their superhuman nature, only to later unveil their mortal vulnerability.

PANEL 46 (Pedagogy Workshop). Language Learning from School to University.

Organiser: Alice Case (Classics for All)

This workshop, facilitated by Classics for All, wishes to explore the persistent disconnect between secondary and tertiary ancient language learning in the UK, with a particular focus on students within state-funded schools. At the secondary level, students encounter a range of qualifications - GCSEs, A-Levels, Scottish Highers, as well as pre-gcse and non-accredited qualifications - with varying emphases on grammar, translation, and cultural context. However, the transition to higher education often reveals a mismatch in expectations, particularly for students entering university without prior language study or from non-traditional routes.

Through lightning talks and other activities this workshop aims to map the varied student journey and fill in the gaps in these journeys highlighting the successes and challenges faced in secondary and tertiary language teaching, including curriculum constraints, pedagogical shifts, and access disparities, in order to create a framework for coordinating future discussions. We will investigate a wide range of experiences of teaching and learning ancient languages from different angles, including the student perspective, that of teachers and tutors and of universities. It will then consider how universities are responding to increasingly diverse student cohorts, including those with no ancient language background, and what support might be required.

The workshop should raise awareness and spark discussion on how we might all better align pedagogical approaches across sectors, support learners through transition, and ensure that access to ancient languages is not limited by prior opportunity. It will create a framework for coordinating future discussions. We will invite audience contribution to potential solutions, such as collaborative curriculum design, bridging courses, and inclusive teaching practices, with a clear outcome for next steps such as setting up a working party and publishing the acquired information. See annual CUCD statistics for reference on numbers https://cucd.blogs.sas.ac.uk/bulletin/

This proposed workshop aligns with the conference theme of access-centred pedagogies, inviting reflection on how language teaching can be reimagined to promote equity and continuity.

The workshop will utilise lightning talks, video shorts and longer style sessions with discussion hearing from 3 distinct groups:

1. STUDENT VOICES:
Over time Classics for All has worked with numerous students through our schools and programmes, including Oxbridge programmes, Greek Academies, University Access Programmes etc and a selection of voices will be selected representing different starting points and university experiences.

2. SECONDARY TEACHERS
As above, Classics for All has a wealth of teachers and tutors to draw on representing traditional language experience, non specialists and those who fill the many gaps in a student's language journey such as summer school tutors.

3. TERTIARY TEACHERS OF LANGUAGE

Classics for All has a close working relationship with many universities and we will draw on this to provide speakers from a range of different experiences both showcasing existing innovative practice and current problems.

Panel 47 (Pedagogy) Classics and Public Policy. Chairs: Gráinne Cassidy (CA); Arlene Holmes-Henderson (Durham)

Organiser: Gráinne Cassidy (CA)

This panel brings together classicists who have experience in the public policy arena. They offer insights from roles in academia, charity and policymaking. At a time when the Humanities are under threat in schools and universities, these colleagues share examples of communicating the value of Classics in high-stakes policy contexts. How does the study of Classics cultivate skills which are useful for policy influencing? How might early career researchers get involved in the policy sphere? What happens when a classicist is seconded into Whitehall to advise on cross-government priorities? This panel convenes individuals who are diversely positioned to explore 'what works' but they also suggest ways to encourage additional members of the classics community to get involved.

Megan Bowler (Oxford): *Working with a think tank during a PhD programme*

In this paper, Megan provides a personal reflection on how working with a think tank during her PhD allowed her to apply her research skills to identify barriers to the study of both modern and ancient languages in UK schools and universities, but also to suggest solutions. Working with the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI), she analysed data, wrote a report and liaised with the national press. She explains how this project aligned with her doctoral studies and offers advice to early career researchers who may wish to enter the policy sphere.

Gráinne Cassidy (Education Co-Ordinator, Classical Association): *Subject Associations and policy makers?*

Gráinne reflects on her role as the Secretariat for the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Classics, the successes it has had since its inception in October 2024, and how this work aligns closely with the work of the Classical Association's Teaching Board, who are currently undertaking a review of English classical qualifications ahead of the next reform point. Gráinne will also share how these experiences overlap with her role as a Director for the Council for Subject Associations. In this paper, Gráinne will reflect on the difficulties Subject Associations face when engaging with policy makers, and how cross-curricular collaborative working can lead to positive outcomes.

Julius Graack (Royal Holloway): *Classics in the European Union*

Julius reflects on how the skills which he developed during his classical studies intersect with those which are valuable in the policy arena. He reflects on his own experiences as a policy advisor in the European Parliament. He identifies both the positive and the negative; a background in Classics helps with speechwriting but not directly with economic policymaking. He explores the influence of Brexit on European politics and conjectures what roles may emerge for classicists in Brussels over the next 3-5 years.

Arlene Holmes-Henderson (Durham): *'Doing' policy as a classicist: the view from inside government*

This paper does two things. Firstly it provides an overview of the new book, 'Classics and Public Policy: perspectives from the UK' (Routledge, 2026), with contributions from academic classicists who have used their research to inform policymaking, and from policymaking colleagues who have a disciplinary background in Classics. The first book of its kind worldwide, it breaks new ground in illustrating the relationship between Classics, policymaking and employability.

Secondly, Arlene reflects on her experience of working inside government as an Expert Fellow, seconded for 12 months to drive forward cross-government innovation. The first Humanities scholar to be appointed to this role, she discusses the policy appetite for diverse evidence and outlines the ways for Classics specialists to get involved. She ends with three provocations for a) government b) academia and c) third sector organisations.

PANEL 48: Queer 6: Magic and Change. Chair: *tbc; venue: #tbc

Ippolita Giannotta (Göttingen): *From a Courtesan to a Philosopher*

Gallus is an entertaining and paradoxical dialogue by Lucian of Samosata. This work is unique among his writings because its protagonists include not only a humble cobbler but also an animal: a rooster. However, the rooster immediately reveals himself to be the famous Pythagoras.

The theory of metempsychosis is used to reach the highest peaks of comedy and sarcasm. For example, in paragraph 19, the cobbler asks, "But once you left the remains of Pythagoras, what body did you take on after that?" The Rooster replies, "That of Aspasia, the courtesan of Miletus".

Later in the dialogue (paragraph 20), after having been Aspasia, Pythagoras claims to have been reincarnated as the cynic Crates, and so the cobbler Mycillus exclaims "By the Dioskouroi, what an unlikelihood—from a courtesan to a philosopher!!".

Lucian, a man of great culture, draws on all previous treatises on Aspasia, presenting her in both a serious and humorous light, but without ever expressing a negative opinion of her, unlike another famous literary figure: Helen.

In this paper, I will outline how Pythagoras' change of gender allows the author to ironise in various ways on the gender difference between men and women, e.g. by bringing up Tiresias; on the theory of metempsychosis itself, which sometimes seems to act paradoxically; and finally on the role of Aspasia, a woman too often considered a mere "courtesan".

We might ask ourselves whether it is right to believe that the figure of the famous hetaerae represents only the simple subtext of a joke intended to emphasise that philosophy and prostitution are similar practices. Or should it be more correct consider the figure of Aspasia in this dialogue, not coincidentally alongside that of Pythagoras, as a confirmation of her role as a philosopher, thus revealing, in a somewhat humorous way, the male bias of philosophy itself?

Phoebe Hancock (Ottawa): *I Put a Spell on You: A Brief Survey of Homo- and Heteroerotic Greek Love Spells*

Erotic magic has long fascinated scholars. Since the first scraps of spells were discovered in the Egyptian desert, they have been analyzed and probed for what they can tell us about the people who lived in the ancient world, especially people whose

voices fell outside the world of the elite. However, while the past few decades have seen investigations into the differences (or lack thereof) between erotic magic used by heteroerotic men and women (Farone, 1999; Pachoumi, 2013), little attention has been paid to differences in the corpus of homoerotic love spells when compared to the heteroerotic ones, except to assert, often off-handedly, that there are none.

This paper will examine the corpus of activated erotic spells in the *Greek and Egyptian Magical Formularies*, the *Oxyrhyncus Papyri*, *the Papyri Graecae Magicae*, and the *Supplementum Magicum*, dividing them into four sub-categories based on the gender of both the spell's user and its victim in an attempt to tease out the differences in the language, theme, and type of magic used. It will show that graphic sexual imagery appears to be the domain of male heteroerotic spells, and that homoerotic and female heteroerotic magic share several similarities. This calls into question both schools of thought about love magic: that there is no difference between queer and male heteroerotic spells (Farone, 1999), and that there was a unified attitude about sexual desire between men and women in the spells (Pachoumi, 2013).

By queering the study of ancient love magic, this paper aims to tease out the nuances in the comparatively rare corpus of non-elite, apolitical writings by women and queer people. As well, in the process of this queering, we can gain new understandings of the way stereotypical gender roles—that of the man as the active seeker of sex and woman as passive receiver—broke down in the presence of real, complicated desire.

Hannah Jorsh (London): *Queer Monsters*

This paper will focus on gender queerness in Greek and Roman monsters and their reception. It will discuss characters such as Empousa, Lamia, Medusa and Polyphemus with a focus on their gender and sexuality.

Considering the definition of the word 'monster', Jeffrey Cohen's 1996 work "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)" sets out parameters for defining a creature as such: they are 'the Other', they are a 'cultural body', they defy categorisation, they elicit both fear and desire, they return or reappear, they serve as protectors or warnings and they symbolise societal change. Many of these paradigms relate to common feelings amongst other marginalised groups who feel 'Othered' by society – this includes members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Monsters, by nature, are transgressive and linked to 'boundary-breaking' behaviours such as non-heterosexual relationships and non-traditional representations of gender (Cohen (1996) 52). In being 'undefinable', many monsters' bodies are changeable, or are locked in the state of transition, leading them to ambiguity in gender representation (Oswald (2012) 343). Monsters and gender-queerness are linked in an undeniable way, as the prominence of gender roles in Greek and Roman culture, and the anxiety around these roles, was an impetus to teratogenesis – the birth of monsters (Cohen (1996) 42). Nowadays, as representatives of the marginalised 'Other', monsters are being reclaimed and redeemed in new adaptations (Gloyn (2024) 562). Contrastingly, in some areas of modern Western culture, monsters are also used to communicate warnings about 'othering' behaviours, including going against traditional gender roles. In both fear and celebration of gender representation, monsters continue to play a role as communicators (Midgley (2003) 98). This paper will consider how these monsters were represented in Greek and Roman culture and how they have been adapted in modern reception to fulfil new roles.

PANEL 49 (Pedagogy): Contemporary Classroom Discussion. Chair: Sharon Marshall (Exeter); venue: #tbc

Margaret-Anne Ellison-Gillis (Barrie, Ontario): *domus Caecilii protegenda est!*

Pompeii yields some of the most impressive archaeological ruins in the world which reveal a great deal about life in the Roman Empire in the first century CE. The House of Lucius Caecilius Iucundus, a prominent businessman in the city is the star of the Cambridge Latin Course and as a result, the house draws significant visitors year-round. But beyond this notoriety, his house is important for a variety of other factors. His house yielded 154 carbonized wax tablets detailing the economic ventures in which he was engaged. When the house was first excavated in the 1870's, a bronze bust of Caecilius was revealed, confirming the ownership of the house. The lararium featured two reliefs recounting the earthquake of 62/63 CE including a visual description of the city walls and gate, used by archaeologists to confirm the use of sling bullets used by Sulla when the city was under siege in 89 BCE. Archaeologists assigned the name of Caecilius to the small street outside his posticum, the vicolo, running parallel to the Via Vesuviana (behind the block of houses). Today, the house is closed to visitors owing to the delicate nature of mosaic floor of the atrium and the fragile nature of the walls. The house endures the ravages of the weather which delivers extraordinary heat in the summer and torrential rain in the winter. It is constantly under observation and conservation. Visitors must content themselves with staring through the gate which protects the house from the pressures of tourism. Now that climate change and tourism are ever-present threats to the preservation of Pompeii, more than ever, the house of Caecilius needs a roof to ensure its long-term survival.

Olga Nikonenko (London): *Too Iconic to be Historical? Cleopatra, Boudica and the Politics of Remembering Women Rebels*

Cleopatra and Boudica remain two of the most recognisable women of antiquity, celebrated as icons of resistance to Rome. Yet their cultural afterlives reveal a troubling paradox: while highly visible in popular imagination, they are rarely presented as genuine historical leaders. Instead, they become vessels for modern archetypes—Cleopatra as femme fatale, Boudica as nationalist heroine—while their actual political strategies, military leadership, and experiences of violence disappear.

Cleopatra has been systematically eroticised and exoticised from Roman sources to Hollywood. Shakespeare to cinema remembers her as seductress rather than capable monarch, her sexuality supposedly explaining her power. Remarkably, despite her formidable political acumen, she has barely emerged as a feminist icon in Egypt and beyond. Boudica offers a stark contrast: central to British and especially British feminist identity from Victorian statues to modern museum displays, she embodies freedom and resistance. Yet her global reach remains limited, her story sanitised. The sexual violence that triggered her revolt—the rape of her daughters—vanishes from most retellings. She becomes a mythic Celtic barbarian rather than a documented leader of native resistance. At the same time, children in museums are invited to role-play gladiators or charioteers—forms of Roman violence glorified—while Boudica's daughters' rape is erased and Cleopatra is viewed from the Roman perspective.

This paper argues that the reception of Cleopatra and Boudica demonstrates how ancient women rebels are turned into icons without history. Their afterlives highlight how gendered violence and political leadership are silenced in favour of

spectacle and symbolism. By situating these figures within debates on pedagogy, reception and public history, I ask how we might move beyond this 'frantic feminism' and reclaim Cleopatra and Boudica not merely as icons, but as historical actors whose legacies expose enduring tensions between gender, violence and empire.

Katharine Russell (Durham): *From Circe to the Classroom: how mythology retellings are shaping access to Classics*

In recent years, myth retelling novels such as Madeline Miller's The Song of Achilles and Circe have become bestsellers, shaping popular understandings of the ancient world. My doctoral research investigates how what I term REMIXes (reimaginings of myth in context) are influencing young people's engagement with Classics in England, changing the landscape of the discipline. Drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data gathered from school and university students, teachers, and industry professionals, I argue that these novels are emerging as significant "entry points" into the discipline, with profound implications for justice and access. Not only are these books acting as a 'gateway drug' to Classics for those who have never encountered it before, but they are also moulding how students forge their own paths through their study of antiquity once there. From my analysis so far, readers' approaches to Classics are more explicitly shaped by questions of reception, by an awareness of bias in sources, and by an interest in marginalised perspectives. The data also shows how emotional investment in characters from antiquity can catalyse their learning. Students report choosing modules, selecting essay topics, and even planning creative or postgraduate projects around these themes. In other words, REMIXes do not just supplement students' encounters with antiquity; they are reframing them, propelling some towards sustained, critical, and creative exploration of untold stories in the ancient world. This effect is especially marked among female and queer-identifying readers, among whom these novels seem to play a particularly motivational role. In light of this, I will finish by asking how educators might respond to this phenomenon most productively with their students.

Eleanor Jenkins (Howell's School): *From Scrolls to Silicon: A Classics Teacher's Guide to Surviving and Thriving with AI* (Lightning talk)

The AI landscape is evolving at remarkable speed, bringing new tools, new possibilities, and new questions for educators. For classics teachers, this shift presents both a challenge and an opportunity: how do we adapt our pedagogy to remain rigorous, relevant, and responsive in an AI-enhanced world?

This lightning talk explores how Latin and Classics educators can navigate this changing terrain. I'll highlight recent developments in AI and share practical examples of how these tools can support lesson planning, differentiation, and student engagement, while critically examining their limitations and risks.

But this isn't just a tech update, it's a pedagogical provocation. I'll invite the audience to consider:

- How do we uphold the integrity and complexity of classical languages when AI tools risk oversimplifying or bypassing the interpretive process?
- What ethical and educational boundaries should we set for student use of AI, especially when it comes to translation and textual analysis?
- How can we prepare PGCE students and early-career teachers to engage critically with AI, resisting overreliance while recognising its potential?

Participants will leave with takeaway tools and strategies, but also with questions to explore in their own educational contexts. This session aims to spark dialogue, encourage experimentation, and help classics teachers move confidently from scrolls to silicon, without losing sight of what makes our discipline enduring.

PANEL 50 Political Philosophy 1: Aristotle's Political Thought. Organiser: Thornton Lockwood. Chair: Carol Atack (Cambridge); venue: #tbc

Aristotle's political thought has been the subject of continuous examination since at least its 13th century transmission to scholars in western Europe. Aristotle's *Politics* examines core political concepts, such as constitution (πολιτεία), what is a citizen (πολίτης), and the very nature of the city (πόλις) itself. The work is explicitly in dialogue not only with Plato (specifically, the *Republic* and the *Laws*), but also with other 5th and 4th century intellectuals such as Xenophon of Athens, Phaleas of Chalcedon, and Hippodamus of Miletus. The *Politics* is also a massive source of historical information about the polis-world of classical Greece, with extended examinations of the constitutions of Sparta, Crete, and Carthage, and detailed taxonomic analysis of different forms of political organization and the kinds of faction (στάσις) that undermine such political organizations. A panel on Aristotle's political thought, thus, appears to be a good fit for the Classical Association annual meeting insofar as Ancient Political Philosophy is a theme for the conference that is likely to inspire interdisciplinary approaches. Our panel proposal represents new trends in Aristotle scholarship insofar as it understands his political philosophy broadly to include not only his *Politics*, but also other works in his corpus such as the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *Constitution of Athens*, and the *Art of Rhetoric*. Aristotle's analysis of turbulent ancient politics also seems of particular interest in the present political moment.

Our first panelist, **James Warren**, examines one of Aristotle's most provocative statements about the breadth of his 'political science,' which he characterizes as part of philosophy concerned with human things. At the least, Aristotle seems to think that political philosophy extends to the study of ethics. But our second panelist, **Bradford Jean-Hyuk Kim**, shows that there are important conceptual bridges between Aristotle's ethical and political writings, including the concept of self-love, which receives extensive attention in the analysis of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics* but also in the critique of Plato's *Republic* in the *Politics*. Our third panelist, **Sarah Simmons**, shows that Aristotle's analysis of the constitution of tyranny appears to be quite indebted to the analysis of the Athenian autocrat Pisistratus whose rule of Athens is examined (and even defended) at length in the *Constitution of Athens*, a work which Simmons shows is significantly more 'philosophical' than scholars have traditionally appreciated. Finally, our fourth panelist, **Jamie Dow**, examines how Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric*—a treatise on forms of public speaking—elucidates major concepts in Aristotle's political philosophy, such as the value of public deliberation and the nature of the common good. Thus, although all four panelists connect their papers to Aristotle's *Politics*, they also show—in several rather different ways—how Aristotle's political philosophy is much broader than analyses of constitutional taxonomy.

We propose a two-hour panel during which each panelist will have approximately twenty minutes of presentation followed by ten minutes of discussion with the panel's conference audience. The panel is interdisciplinary and includes scholars not only from the faculty of classics, but also from the faculties of philosophy and political theory. Although two of the panelists are well-published

scholars with decades of experience in research and teaching, the panel also includes two junior faculty at the beginning of their scholarly careers. We believe our panel exhibits cutting-edge scholarship on Aristotle's political thought and connects quite well with an explicit theme of the 2026 Classical Association annual conference.

James Warren (Cambridge): *The Philosophy that Deals with Things Human*

Migration Towards the end of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle turns to the 'political art' or perhaps 'political science' and begins to consider how it is possible through laws and other political institutions to encourage citizens to develop the virtues he has established as characteristic of a good human life. He concludes with a passage which many commentators have taken to point towards the questions and topics he goes on to address in the *Politics*. And it is at this point that he appears to provide a label for the kind of philosophy to which the *Nicomachean Ethics* and its partner, the *Politics*, both belong.

> "Well then, since previous thinkers left the subject of legislation unexamined, it is better, perhaps, if we ourselves start a further investigation of it, and of the constitutions in general, so that as far as possible the part of philosophy that deals with things human (ἡ περὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπεια φιλοσοφία) may be brought to completion." *NE* X.9 1181b12–15 (trans. C. J. Rowe)

What does Aristotle mean by 'the part of philosophy that deals with things human'? I try to answer by considering texts from elsewhere in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, elsewhere in the Aristotelian corpus, and elsewhere in the literature with which Aristotle was familiar.

Bradford Jean-Hyuk Kim (Southampton), *Aristotle's Politics on Self-Love*

This paper assesses partiality, self-interest, and their relationship in Aristotle's *Politics*. The first part of the paper exposits what sort of partiality Aristotle employs. Not only does Book II's criticism of Plato indicate that partiality is acceptable in terms of outward, preferential treatment (e.g., a father's displaying special treatment to his son and not others' sons). Aristotle also thinks that partiality is acceptable in foundational terms (e.g., a father displays special treatment to his son *qua* his in particular). The second part of the paper exposits what sort of self-interest Aristotle employs, and how it relates to partiality. Also in his criticism of Plato, Aristotle states that the aforementioned partiality is acceptable on the grounds that self-love is natural. Yet Aristotle also suggests that one should not be a 'self-lover' in the sense of loving oneself to excess. I argue that the *Politics* employs a value-neutral conception of self-love. Unlike *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.8, the *Politics* does not confer blame upon self-love with regard to its target (i.e., the appetitive or rational part of the soul). Rather, it confers blame upon an excessive degree of self-love and implies that self-love, and what it grounds, partiality, must be balanced against the interests of others. Finally, part 3 of the paper highlights a problem of the aforementioned balancing act. At multiple locations and in multiple formulations, the *Politics* distinguishes correct from incorrect constitutions as involving rule for the sake of others and not, except accidentally, oneself. I argue that this effacement of one's own interest falls prey to the same complaint that Aristotle levels against Plato, of eliminating happiness for the rulers, and also gets uncomfortably close to the situation of Aristotle's 'natural slaves', who exist not for their own sake but only for the sake of the other (i.e., the master).

Sarah Simmons (Cambridge), *The Half-Good Tyrant of Politics V.11*

Toward the end of Book V of *Politics*, Aristotle turns to the question of how to preserve a monarchy, and seems especially interested in tyranny. One way to do it, he says, involves the tried-and-true authoritarian techniques, such as disposing of potential rivals, sowing division among subjects, and maintaining complete oversight of all of one's subjects' activities. There is another way, however, which involves trying to appear more like a king, by seeming to do such things as managing city finances responsibly, not committing *hubris*, and acting piously. Taking (or seeming to take) actions of this sort, Aristotle says, will stabilize the regime, and will also result in a different kind of ruler. Aristotle says of this tyrant that "he himself, in his own character (ἦθος), will either be nobly disposed to virtue (διακεῖσθαι...καλῶς πρὸς ἀρετὴν) or else half good (ἡμίχρηστον), not wicked but half wicked (ἡμιπόνηρον)." This seems a puzzling statement in several respects. First what does it mean to be "well disposed toward virtue" if not being virtuous? It is apparently not the same as being "half-good," since the tyrant who behaves in this kingly way will be one or the other. This passage is the only place in the Aristotelian corpus where the term ἡμίχρηστος is used, and ἡμιπόνηρος has only one other usage, found in *Nicomachean Ethics* VII.10. In this paper, I will attempt to make sense of what Aristotle hopes to convey about the character of the "kingly" tyrant by comparing this claim and the discussion of the ἡμιπόνηρος man against the historical examples cited by Aristotle, focusing especially on the Pisistratids. They receive a brief mention in *Politics*, but are discussed at more length in *Ath. Pol.*, which I contend contains many valuable examples of Aristotle's political and ethical principles. I hope to show that the discussion of the Pisistratids in *Ath. Pol.* is invaluable in interpreting this otherwise puzzling statement about the character of tyrants.

Jamie Dow (Leeds), *Aristotle on Rhetoric, Public Deliberation, and the Public Good*

In this paper I defend the view that, for Aristotle, rhetoric is an expertise in discharging a particular civic role. Discharging this role requires contributing persuasive speeches to public deliberation that make the best possible case in favour of one particular view of the issue at hand. Expertise in doing so obviously increases the chances of the speaker's cause being adopted by the citizens in the audience. But it also benefits their deliberation, and thereby serves the public good, by enabling them to make their judgement having heard the best case in favour of rival views. This view is, I suggest, required to make sense of some key passages in the opening chapters of the Rhetoric. It also explains why Aristotle sees rhetoric as, at its core, an ability to produce 'proofs' (πίστεις), and why we should understand these as 'proper grounds for conviction'. On this view, expert practitioners of rhetoric have in common with dialecticians that their obligations arise from their taking up a role within a 'common task' (κοινὸν ἔργον), a task whose most important element is identifying the best arguments that can be made in support of any given conclusion.

PANEL 51 Commemoration 5: Commemorating the Dead in Roman Culture. Chair: Julene Abad Del Vecchio (Manchester); venue: tbc

Ludivine Capra (Université de Strasbourg): *Roman Women commemorated as spinners in Augustodunum: a symbolic or professional craft practice?*

When Trita, Hilaricla and an anonymous woman are represented holding distaff and spindle on their funerary stelae, can we deduce that they practiced spinning as a job? In this paper I will study three stelae from the 2nd century A.D. which were found in 2004 in the necropolis Pont l'Evêque in Autun, France (Augustodunum). Considering

the tradition of occupation stelae which spread from the 1st to the 3rd centuries A.D. in Roman Gaul, and the tradition for craftspeople to represent their activity with a tool, we can ask ourselves if the three spinners from Augustodunum were craftswomen. The main challenge in the interpretation of these three stelae is that a spindle or a distaff can also be chosen for a funerary portrait, as a symbol of feminine quality, accordingly to the long tradition inherited from Greek mythology. Thus, it will be necessary to do comparisons with other stelae representing women holding textile tools as the one of Genitiva and Lupula from the necropolis of Alléans, France. Then the iconographic analysis will be supplemented by considering the epigraphic data from Roman Gaul and Italy, and finally the archaeological data, to face the difficulty of interpreting the representations of textile activity in a funerary context.

Oisín Parsons (University College, Dublin): *Lucan and the Living Dead*

Each time a character in Lucan's *Pharsalia* fails to stay dead, or fails to die, it represents a larger failure to properly commemorate the dead. It has been argued that the *Pharsalia* functions as a funeral *monumentum*, a memorialisation of pre-Caesarian Rome (Thorne, 2011, p.363-381). This paper argues that to do so successfully Lucan must also establish that such memorialisation is necessary.

In the *Pharsalia* death does not function logically. Some characters are dead who, logically, should be alive, and some are alive who should be dead. Interactions between the living and the dead are a recurring motif in the poem, creating a world where the barrier between life and death is permeable in both directions. From undead corpses and ghosts, to characters who defy death to remain alive beyond what is naturally possible, the *Pharsalia* depicts a broad spectrum of living dead throughout. This paper examines these characters and their interactions as a united motif in the poem, rather than as a series of isolated incidents, in order to draw out a broader theme which spans the whole epic.

Every individual instance is a symptom of a larger issue at play in Lucan's poetic world - the living death of the Roman Republic under the Caesars. Just as a soldier's body can be reanimated by the witch Erichtho, so too has the body politic of Rome been reanimated to serve the emperor. In the world of the poem death has failed, there is no apocalypse. The Roman world continues on, unaware that it is already, although not yet, dead.

By representing in these individual characters the living death of the nation as a whole Lucan shows how unnatural this state of things is. Without proper commemoration Rome will continue to be haunted by the ghost of its former self.

Jonathan Steward (Cambridge) *Dead in the water: bodily anxieties, the sea, and the dead in ancient Rome*

The sea is intimately connected to death in the Roman imagination; it becomes fruitful terrain for exploring the horrors of dying, death and displacement, the overwhelming waves of grief in those left behind, the transition to the afterlife, and the liminal status of the dead and their bodies. The sea's connection to death in the early empire is polyvalent. It focalised anxieties about the fate and decay of the corpse. Beyond concern about dying at sea—a very real prospect given the number of shipwrecks—Greek and Latin poems written in the city of Rome conjure up gruesome and frightening images of bodies lying washed up on foreign shores, disintegrating in the salt water and being eaten by fish. And yet, marine imagery features heavily in funerary art with a much more positive valence, particularly on sarcophagi (over 400 examples), where the sea seems to be more a comfort or distraction, as nymphs and

dolphins frolic amid the waves. The sea, as a liminal space, a means of transport and connection, can also come to represent the passage between life and death, and the separation of body and soul, particularly through depictions of psychopomp Charon across a variety of funerary media. This cluster of ideas and images from the city of Rome in the early empire is, at first glance, disparate. This paper, however, argues that the sea functioned in the Roman imagination as a productive metaphor for the unknowability of death. Taking an interdisciplinary approach to visual and literary sources, it demonstrates that the sea, vast, unforgiving, and at the limits of human knowledge, proved fertile ground on to which anxieties and hopes for the dead could be displaced.

PANEL 52 (Pedagogy Workshop) Loving Latin: exploring the joy (and educational value) of hearing and speaking Latin. Chairs: Lisa Hay (Cambridge), Christian Laes (Manchester), Mair Lloyd (Cambridge)

The organisers of this workshop are part of the team putting together audio recordings for the new editions of the Cambridge Latin course and they are united in their belief in the importance of hearing and speaking Latin to make Latin learning joyful and accessible for all manner of students. Their combined teaching experience spans UK secondary schools to doctoral studies at UK universities so this session will have something to offer for Latin teachers in any of the contexts in between.

Each of the three organisers will provide one or more lightening talks as a prelude to activities that they have used in their own Latin teaching practice. Throughout, they will each encourage active attendee engagement in the activities they lead and then invite feedback and further ideas from participants. Each organiser will chair the parts of the session that they lead. All levels of engagement will be very welcome, and no-one's Latin pronunciation will be scrutinised!

Lisa's main focus will be exploring how exposure to spoken Latin in the secondary school classroom can facilitate language learning. She will experiment with the use of images, stories, performance and simplified conversational Latin appropriate for that environment.

Mair will draw on her experience of making CLC audio recordings to demonstrate and invite workshop participants into the fun to be had from the enthusiastic hearing and telling of tales in Latin at any age. She will also demonstrate some listening activities that she uses with her Open University beginner Latin students and explore how offering a choice of different ways of responding to a reading opens up comfortable engagement to a variety of students.

Christian will explain his approach to encouraging Latin listening and speaking skills for adult participants in the online Circulus Mamuciensis (Manchester circle) where participants discuss everyday matters in Latin as well as reading and discussing a wide variety of Latin texts together.

SATURDAY 11 APRIL 24 - SESSION 7: 16.10-17.10

PANEL 53: Women and Power. Chair: Tim Kenny (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Marina Pavlidou-Elamin (London) *Threads of Desire: Textile Tools and Gendered Poetics in Sappho and Theocritus*

This paper offers a parallel reading of Sappho's fragments 102 and 99a, and Theocritus' *Idyll* 28, tracing how textile tools function as charged material objects

through which the poets negotiate gender, affect, and poetic agency. By tracing the distaff from archaic Lesbos to Ptolemaic Alexandria, I follow Theocritus' engagement with Sapphic poetics, as he resumes Aeolic metre and diction while reinscribing female-coded aesthetics within a masculinised economy of virtue and patronage, a heteronormative, courtly ideology, and a masculine poetic tradition.

In both poets, the textile tools do more than represent affective feelings; they enact them, crumple beneath them, and carry their imprint. Sappho's loom falls inert under the force of longing, incapable of spinning and undone by overwhelming desire. By contrast, Theocritus' ivory distaff is carved, gifted, and celebrated as a token of conjugal virtue, civic order, and male authorship. In Theugenis' hands, it works on two planes at once: as a practical weaving tool and a resonant talisman for the poet's voice, so that she becomes the living shuttle and the distaff the charged symbol she carries.

The distaff thus serves as a microcosm of broader poetic and ideological negotiations, becoming a material hinge between lyric disruption and Hellenistic refinement. It is not a passive symbol but an agent that stores memory, shapes affect, and mediates literary exchange. Thus, *Idyll* 28 stages a gendered correction: from lyric crisis to stable domesticity, from feminine, passionate expressions of longing to male praise.

Caren Crofton Home (Trinity College, Dublin): *Analysing female anger and vengeance across two seminal literary works, Seneca's Medea and Ved Vyasa's Mahābhārata*

When the passion of anger commingles with a sense of injured honour for characters like Medea and Draupadi, it becomes the driving force towards claiming control of one's own narrative and reversing the dominant order in a phallocentric world. Seneca's Medea and Vyasa's Draupadi are, to quite an extent, unique characters in their myths— their heightened sense of self and injured honour become the turning point in their narrative and, largely, in the lives of the men related to them.

A most unique aspect of Medea's self-awareness is the fact that she is astutely aware of how conducive her being has been to Jason and his Argonautic expedition. Moreover, she exhibits a boldness and anger unparalleled in any other Senecan tragedy-her anger is not disguised, but is made obvious through her dialogues with the other characters of the play and her tenacity to get what she wants, even if it is at the cost of what means to her the most, her children. Medea's anger, in this regard, is legendary— she embraces this passion with open arms and willingly allows herself to be consumed whole by it; the idea of avenging her honour and self-respect outshines the love of a mother. It is precisely this destructive *furor* which enables her to step off the margins and assume control of Her story.

Fully conscious of her power and sense of self-worth, Draupadi directs the course of the narrative, following the Kaurava's attempt to publicly disrobe her, and assumes a pivotal role in *Mahābhārata*. Unlike Medea, however, Draupadi uses her fury to admonish her husbands and Krishna, her *sakha* or dearest friend, and incite them to wage the epic war in order to avenge her honour.

In this paper, I undertake a comparative analysis of Medea and Draupadi, as two iconic fictional raging women in order to explore how female rage and vengeance become an important tool for these mythical heroines in their search for justice and piecing together their broken honour— especially, how female ire was, across cultures and ages, depicted as a force that had the potential to put an end to generations and destroy nations. In this paper, I also analyse the angry speech of these two characters

because both these women resort to reproach, exhortations, and self-pity frequently in order to fan the flames of their wrath, exaggerate their miserable plight and draw the attention of the cosmos to their suffering. Both these heroines have divine blessings to carry out their vengeance— while Draupadi has divinities partake in the great war on the side of the right (in this case, hers and her husbands'), Medea uses her connection with Sol to escape Corinth after massacring her sons and destroying the kingdom.

Even though composed centuries and cultures apart, one consistently comes across characters that are not too dissimilar in the way they feel injustice, the importance they give to honour, and the extent to which they will go to avenge disobedience. Certain female figures in classical texts, like Draupadi and Medea, though part of very different stories and ages, become exempla for that raging female who refused to accept disobedience and affront to her honour. Self-righteous or upholders of "dhārma" in their own eyes, these women shed light on what female anger truly was capable in the eyes of many through various eras and across civilisations. This paper will analyse these characters and their passion of anger in the light of such aspects. Through such an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach, I hope to contribute towards making the study of and research in Classics more diverse and accessible for scholars from the Indian sub-continent.

Astor Bridges-Martin (Exeter): *Shadow Women* (Lightning Talk)

Numismatics, agency and female dominance, this is the embodiment of the legendary Queen Zenobia and Empress Julia Domna. Within this brief lightening talk on my developing undergraduate dissertation, the coinage of both pioneering figures will be unpacked to discuss whether a Roman empress had greater numismatic agency than a provincial queen on the fringes of empire. Eastern religious iconography and overstriking will be discussed when breaking down the coinage on offer as I present a compelling case for how we should interpret this evidence. Upon my analysis, I will decide whether the position for a woman at the heart of Roman imperialism or a woman working beyond the state produced greater numismatic agency. This lightening talk will be open to interaction, questioning and engagement from the audience to aid further unveiling of the female Syrian impact upon the fabric of the Roman empire.

PANEL 54 Classical Receptions. Chair: *tbc; venue: #tbc

Paul T. M. Jackson (Le Centre international de Valbonne) *From Virgil to the Musketeers: The Reception of Latin Literature in the Works of Alexandre Dumas*

The world remembers Alexandre Dumas. Not a year seems to go by without another rendition of one of his works. For fans of Dumas, his penchant for classical allusion is notable. However, the extent of his reception of classical literature has been largely overlooked.

Three of Dumas's more obscure works, Isaac Laquedem, *Acte*, and *The Memoirs of Horace*, are editions in my Classical Dumas Series, critical translations into English of works set in the ancient world that hope to present another, perhaps lesser appreciated, aspect of the author of *The Three Musketeers*—his interest in, and passion for, antiquity. The research that Dumas evidently conducted for these works is remarkable: for Isaac, the likes of Virgil, Cicero, Tacitus, and Apuleius; for *Acte*, Suetonius, Pliny the Elder, Livy, and Juvenal; and for Horace, not only the poet himself, but also Seneca, Aulus Gellius, Ovid, Aulus Donatus, Valerius Maximus, and Lucretius.

Of course, there are errors and embellishments, but in each of these works, there is a concerted effort to bring the past to life, whether it be through the first ever chariot-race in literature in *Acte* or the wild beast hunt in *Horace*; or whether it be his endeavour to create more sympathetic and rounded characters than those that history has bestowed upon us, like the Olympic champion Nero in *Acte*, or strong female leads like the eponymous *Acte*, not to mention his genderfluid Sporus-Sabina in *Acte*.

Acte and *Horace* almost bookend his writing career, but each of these, and Isaac in between them, reveal Dumas as more than the popularist he has been made out to be, but a writer steeped in classical literature and passionate about its reception.

Jo Messore (Exeter) *All roads lead to Valyria: Classical Worldbuilding in George R.R. Martin's A Song of Ice and Fire series*

A self-described reader of popular history, Goerge R.R. Martin has long drawn upon historical examples for worldbuilding in his popular fantasy series, *A song of Ice and Fire.* An aspect of this historical influence that has received far less scholarly attention, and which this paper shall be addressing, is the influence of the ancient world. I shall explore this specifically through the ancient empire of Valyria that Martin created. As one of the most popular and influential examples of contemporary epic fantasy, I will argue that Martin's work serves as a useful case study to understand broader trends in recurring engagement with the ancient world in epic fantasy.

An advanced, militaristic, and expansionist empire of dragonlords that rose and fell hundreds of years before the main setting of the series, Valyria serves a similar function in the imagination and history of Martin's world that the ancient world serves in our own. This paper will primarily address the strong parallels to the Roman empire such as its military conquests, slaves, gladiators, architectural feats, road networks, and linguistic ubiquity. I will then explore the other parallels to classical civilisations, both mythical and historical, such as classical Athens and Atlantis.

In exploring the aspects, associations and tropes associated with the ancient world within the popular understanding, and considering how they then manifest in the fictional Valyrian empire, this paper will highlight how the memory of the Greco-Roman world has been distilled through popular presentations and imaginings. Furthermore, in considering how elements from different geographical and temporal points are melded into this one fictional empire, I will show how the ancient world is often blended in popular understanding, treated as a monolith, rather than the rich tapestry of cultures and nations it actually consisted of. In understanding what is popularised and preserved, and what is lost, I aim to show in this paper how exploring Martin's work can help us to understand the ongoing and evolving legacy of the ancient world in the popular imagination.

Lynn Kozak (McGill University): *New Gods*

A Science fiction has long co-opted the ancient Greek gods for grappling with new technological possibilities—consider Prometheus's many receptions from Mary Shelley to Ridley Scott. This paper examines a specific recent trend where contemporary science fiction television and film use the Greek gods to explore possible evolutions of intelligence. First I will argue, with examples from Greek literary sources, that the Greek gods, so recognisably human in their forms and in their foibles, but so clearly not-human in their near omnipotence and immortality, offer a perfect paradigm within which to place emerging technologies of intelligence, including artificial intelligence, both virtual and embodied/robotic, as well as the

potentials of virtual, uploaded, or augmented human intelligence. The Greek gods also provide the cultural and temporal distance with which these explorations can take place across diverse production/reception contexts. This paper will focus primarily on three recent television texts and one film, all of which adapt earlier literary texts—AMC's *Pantheon* (American, 2022–2023, showrunner Craig Silverstein, based on Ken Liu's 2014–2015 short stories), Genco/Netflix's *Pluto* (Japanese, 2023, showrunner Toshio Kawaguchi, based on the 2003–2009 manga by Naoki Urasawa), Apple's *Foundation* (American/Irish, 2021–present, showrunner David S. Goyer, based on the 1942–1953 short stories and novels of Isaac Asimov), and *Ich bin dein Mensch* (2021, German, director Maria Schrader; based on a 2017 novel by Emma Braslavsky)—with some consideration of how the 2020 public releases of scaled, large language models like ChatGPT affected these adaptations (and our understandings of them) from their source materials. Finally, this paper will demonstrate how and why these Greek gods continue to meet the moment in our evolving technoscape, and how they can give us the tools with which to (perhaps warily) relate to it.

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PANEL 55 Diplomacy 2. Chair: Leah Lazar (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Jacopo Napoli (Kent) *Roman soft power: the case of Athens*

The modern scholarship on Roman imperialism often emphasises military conquest or formal diplomacy, leaving underexplored subtler mechanisms of influence that shaped Rome's expansion. This paper engages with Nye's concept of soft power (1989)—a state's ability to attract rather than coerce—and connects it to Cicero's *vis benevolentiae* (strength of good will), to examine how Rome exerted non-coercive influence. Specifically, I analyse how Rome attracted Athens through its soft power.

The purpose of this paper is to argue that Athens' alignment with Rome in the late 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE was driven by strategic decisions of its elites, responding to Roman soft power. By applying the concept of soft power to Roman expansion, I will show how economic opportunity, elite network, and political usefulness made Rome a desirable ally. This reframes Roman influence as a process rooted in utility and attraction, rather than domination.

While Roman military superiority provided a strategic backdrop, it was economic integration, political usefulness and elite networks that proved decisive. I will first show how Athens trusted in Roman usefulness to do its own politics, then I will observe how the transformation of Delos into a free port intensified trade in luxury goods and slaves, embedding Athens in Roman commercial networks. Roman and Italian *negotiatores* (businessmen) became active in Athenian life, and their inclusion in the ephebate fostered cultural ties. All these factors reveal how Roman soft power
reshaped Athenian autonomy and strategy.

This paper contributes to the theme of ancient political philosophy by exploring how Roman influence could operate through attraction rather than coercion—a dynamic Cicero called *vis benevolentiae*. While not systematic, such ideas reflect a Roman awareness of soft power. Reframing expansion through soft power reveals a nuanced understanding of imperial dynamics and invites reflection on autonomy and attraction in the Hellenistic world.

Matt Thompson (Nottingham) *Beyond Thermopylai: Diplomatic and Cultural Interaction between Sparta and the Near East*

The relationship between Sparta and Persia is persistently and widely presented as one of fierce hostility, mainly due to an almost obsessive focus on the iconic Battle of Thermopylai (480 BCE) and subsequently contorted by Zack Snyder's 2006 film *300*. This perception has long overshadowed the more complex cultural and socio-economic relationship between Sparta, Ionia, and non-Greek powers in the Near East during the Archaic and Classical periods. The proposed paper seeks to take early steps in looking past Thermopylai in order to allow a more nuanced understanding of Sparta's relationship with Persia and the East to emerge. It aims to first establish the links, evident in literary sources and material evidence, between Sparta and Greek and non-Greek communities prior to the rise of Achaemenid Persia, notably Lydia, Egypt, Samos, and Miletus. Secondly, it will question how such links might have been affected by the rise of Achaemenid Persia in the mid-sixth century, and, crucially, seek to highlight hidden disagreement within Sparta regarding policy towards this new power, and how this disagreement between key Spartan figures was distorted by later literary narratives. I will focus upon the movement and exchange not only of goods, but the semi-regular eastern movement of prominent Spartans, such as Demaratus (c. 491 BCE) and Clearchus 401 BCE), and the lasting ties between influential Spartans and foreign nobility. The ending note of the paper comes with the last influx of Persian money into Spartan hands during the failed rebellion of King Agis against Antipater of Macedon in 331 BCE.

PANEL 56:Textual Matters. Chair: *tbc; venue: #tbc

Benjamin Wilck: *The Alternative in Euclid's Alternative Definitions: A Case Study of the Sentential Connective ἤ in Greek Scientific Prose*

I critically examine the interpretation of the adjunctive particle ἤ in recent scholarship on Greek scientific prose, contributing to a better understanding of the syntactic and semantic functions of sentential connectives such as 'and,' 'or,' 'either...or,' and 'if...then' in Greek mathematics. Scholars have interpreted ἤ in Greek mathematical texts as meaning 'and' or 'either...or' rather than simply 'or' when occurring in multiple definitions. Notably, Dickey (2007, 108) asserts that ἤ (as well as ἄλλως) in multiple definitions more generally often functions as the conjunctive connective 'and'. In turn, Brodersen (2021, 37) translates the sentential operator ἤ in Nicomachus' multiple definition of number as πλῆθος ὡρισμένον ἢ μονάδων σύστημα ἢ ποσότητος χύμα ἐκ μονάδων συγκείμενον (*Introduction to Arithmetic* I.7, 13,7–8 Hoche) by an exclusive rather than inclusive alternative.

Against such approaches, I maintain that ἤ and ἄλλως in multiple definitions do not indicate a conjunction or exclusive alternative, nor do they indicate an inclusive alternative. Rather, following Mueller's(1981, 104)formalizations of Euclid's multiple definitions in the Elements, I argue that ἤ and ἄλλως indicate a biconditional between distinct yet equivalent accounts of the same definiendum. Euclid's *Elements* (c. 3rd century BCE) contains seven multiple definitions (III.def.1i-ii; III.def.11i-ii; V.def.17i-ii; VII.def.7i-ii; VII.def.18i-ii; VII.def.19i-ii; XI.def.11i-ii Heiberg). Building on Acerbi's (2008; 2021, Chapter 5.3) study of sentential connectives in Greek mathematics and Wilck's (2020) typology of the Elements' definitions, I show that Euclid consistently marks multiple definitions with the connective particle ἤ, or, alternatively, with the adverb ἄλλως "alternatively".

After addressing putative counterexamples and analogous difficulties in pre- and post-Euclidean Greek mathematical, scientific, and philosophical prose, I conclude that not every occurrence of the adjunctive connective in definitions signals

multiple definition; rather, only those connecting distinct yet equivalent definitions do so.

Jordi Alonso (Louisiana State): *Ordering by Scent: Incense, Embodiment, and the Orphic Hymns*

The received order of the *Orphic Hymns*, fixed by Filippo Giunta's 1500 edition, has long guided scholarship despite lacking manuscript authority or a clear ritual rationale. This paper reconsiders the Hymns' organization through the sensory dimensions of Orphic practice— especially incense prescriptions, proprioception, and kinaesthetic awareness. I argue that the incense cues embedded in the Hymns suggest an alternative sequencing logic rooted not in Renaissance editorial convention but in embodied ritual performance.

Rather than treating incense as an aesthetic supplement, I propose it functioned as a structuring device, guiding worshippers through a progression of scents that coordinated bodily movement and ritual space. Hymns employing storax or aromatic herbs, for example, may have formed clusters designed to sustain sensory continuity and ritual momentum. A case study of Hymn 51 to the Nymphs illustrates how olfactory and kinetic elements converge: the hymn's call for fragrant herbs reinforces the airy, fluid motion of the nymphs (ἠερόφοιτοι), while the diffusion of incense smoke mirrors their light-footed presence.

Foregrounding the olfactory and kinaesthetic cues of the Hymns both challenges the textual rigidity of the Giunta edition and contributes to broader debates on embodiment in ancient religion. By situating incense and herbs as ritual resources, the paper also engages with the conference theme of "Environment, Resources and the Ancient World", highlighting how ecological materials structured ritual experience and knowledge transmission. The Hymns emerge not as a loosely ordered anthology but as a dynamic ritual sequence shaped by scent, movement, and sound. More broadly, this approach underscores the role of inner senses in Greek religious practice, expanding critical approaches beyond the visual and auditory to recover the corporeal experience of divine encounter.

PANEL 57: Digital Story Presentation

Gordon Davies (Cambridge Museum of Technology): *Classical Tradition On-Screen: Michelangelo Antonioni's Nettezza Urbana | Urban Sanitation (1948), where ancient city met post-war Rome*

Co-creators Tulsi Parikh, Lorenzo Bartocci.

This digital story, co-produced by Gordon Davies and Tulsi Parikh and with location research by Lorenzo Bartocci, will revisit the visual language of one of cinema's most influential filmmakers (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1912–2007) in framing antiquity's presence within a modern cityscape.

Over thirty years after Classicist William Arrowsmith's appraisal of Michelangelo Antonioni's filmography (*Antonioni: Poet of Images*, 1995, Oxford University Press), this session will provide commentary on Antonioni's first completed film ***N.U* (*Nettezza Urbana Urban Sanitation*, 1948)**.

Filmed in Rome, Antonioni filmed the labour of waste collection against the city's monumental landscape. Classical ruins appear only incidentally, mostly obscured by the contemporary urban fabric: Rome 'masked' by its own present.

The digital story will also revisit Classicist William Arrowsmith's commentaries about Antonioni's filmography. Antonioni complimented Arrowsmith

as a ‘creative critic’; this video-essay will also form a meta-commentary on why Classicists are well-equipped to be film critics!

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SUNDAY 12 APRIL MARCH - SESSION 8: 9.00-11.00

PANEL 58: Africa 4: Literature and Africa. Chair: *tbc venue: #tbc

Abigail Sieradzki (Independent Researcher): *Between Dreams, Marriages, and Institutes: Reading Cicero in Late Antique North Africa*

This paper examines the role of select authors from Late Antique North Africa in preserving, transmitting, and engaging with Ciceronian texts, many of which are now lost. Traditionally, the fourth to sixth centuries A.D. have been a period primarily associated with decline, often due to the collapse of the Western Roman Empire in 476 A.D. The political, social and cultural situation in North Africa was not exempt from facing challenges during this period, with the creation of the Vandal Kingdom in the fifth century and the conquest by Byzantine forces in the sixth century. Despite all this significant upheaval, classical Latin education continued and, in some instances, thrived. In particular, notable authors from this period in North Africa engaged extensively with Cicero's texts and would themselves go on to be well-read in the Middle Ages. Was it a coincidence that authors who hailed from North Africa during this period happened to know a significant range of Cicero's corpus, or was there something more at hand? Using literary analysis, this paper will examine a selection of authors who had used Ciceronian texts in their own works from the fourth to sixth centuries A.D., including Martianus Capella and his *De Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* (On the Marriage of Philology and Mercury). I will consider which of Cicero's texts were used, in what contexts they were employed and significantly, what this can inform us of North Africa's role in the preservation and transmission of Cicero's corpus; a factor that has not been paid as much attention in scholarship concerning reception studies of Cicero.

Edjalma Nepomoceno Pina (Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo, Brazil): *From Ekphrasis to Mosaic: Sensory and Visual Constructions of the Rustic Body in Africa Proconsularis (2nd-3rd c. CE)*

Roman society under the Principate was structured by a hierarchy in which status was communicated through the body. Walking, speaking, dressing, and maintaining a clean, disciplined, and healthy appearance were forms of displaying power, virtue, and education. The elite, cultivated in *humanitas*, fashioned their bodies as vehicles of prestige, marking a clear separation from the mass of manual workers, often depicted as unrefined, vicious, or animal-like. Farmers, shepherds, domestic slaves, and millers were frequently described in terms of their physical and sensory traits, reinforcing their marginal status in the social order. This paper examines how the bodies of these workers in Africa Proconsularis were perceived by local elites through a combined analysis of Apuleius and one contemporary mosaic. While Apuleius emphasizes, drawing on physiognomic conventions, grotesque and degrading features (stooped backs, dirt, pale skin, rough voices) mosaics such as that of the *Laberii* house in Uthina (2nd-3rd c. CE) present workers in colorful, well-kept garments, suggesting order and harmony. This contrast is not accidental: whereas Apuleius' descriptions reinforce cultural prejudices against labor, the visual program of the mosaic communicated the wealth, benevolence, and authority of the patron, idealizing rural labor as part of the villa's prosperity. By exploring these different discourses, the paper argues that elite literary and visual representations attached moral, social, and

political meanings to sensory markers such as smell, color, texture, and sound. These elements were culturally mediated perceptions that reinforced hierarchies, but also could be reshaped to project patronal generosity and abundance. The study thus contributes to broader discussions of embodiment, marginality, and the politics of perception in the Roman world, while emphasizing the African provinces as crucial sites for understanding how sensory hierarchies operated in imperial society.

Haggai Olshanetsky (Warsaw) and Lev Cosijns (Oxford): *Egypt as a Scapegoat for Plague: the Justinianic Plague as a Case Study*

Throughout the Roman period, Egypt was repeatedly blamed as the gateway or origin of diseases in the Empire. In recent decades, such depictions have usually been regarded as a literary topos rather than a reliable reflection of events, often inspired by earlier traditions, most notably Thucydides' famous account of the plague in Athens during the Peloponnesian War. More recently, however, some have argued that references to Egypt as the source of disease should be treated as historically credible. Accordingly, the current presentation examines this phenomenon by using the Justinianic plague as a case study. Archaeological evidence for the plague's origins will be set alongside contemporary literary accounts, exposing the significant disparity between them. The analysis suggests that Egypt could not have been the entry route of the disease into the Empire. More broadly, this highlights both the persistence and the problematic nature of this literary topos, underlining the need for caution when evaluating ancient texts that echo earlier accounts of past plagues and wars.

PANEL 59: Political Philosophy 2. Chair: Alberto Esu (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Myrthe Bartels (Toronto/Pardubice): *The Allegory of Intoxication: Testing Philosophers in Plato's Laws 1–2*

This paper challenges the prevailing view that philosophy plays a minimal role in Plato's *Laws*. It argues that the episode about *symposia* and the "Chorus of Dionysus" in *Laws* 1–2 is an allegorical representation of the testing and selection of prospective philosophers outlined in *Republic* 7.

The conventional reading of the *symposia* episode in *Laws* 1–2 holds that the choruses in *Laws* are vehicles for instilling civic virtues. The supposed function of immoderate wine-drinking for the "Chorus of Dionysus" is widely interpreted as a means to overcome the excessive shame and coldness of old age that prevent the elderly citizens from participating in these communal choral performances. This interpretation, however, fails to account for (1) evidence that the "music" of the Chorus of Dionysus is philosophy; (2) the striking correspondences between the Chorus of Dionysus and the Nocturnal Council; and (3) the fact that intoxication is said to be a character test for the young.

Through a careful examination of the linguistic and thematic parallels between the *symposia* in *Laws* 1–2 and the dialectical testing of potential philosophers in *Republic* 7, this paper argues that drunkenness in the *Laws* mirrors the effects of the exposure to refutation in *Republic* 7. Such correspondences suggest that the *symposia* should be understood as an allegorical representation of the testing and evaluation of the philosophical potential of pre-selected younger citizens that would have been recognisable for the reader familiar with Plato's dialogues. In conclusion, the paper reassesses the relation between the *Laws* and *Republic*: if it is right that Plato upholds

the crucial importance of dialectic for the training and selection of philosophically qualified rulers in the *Laws*, this necessitates a fundamental reassessment of the *Laws* in ancient political philosophy and challenges the idea of Plato's "development".

Thornton Lockwood (Quinnipiac University): *Plato's Laws and Aristotle's Politics in dialogue on Sparta*

Scholars such as Morrow (1960), Bertelli (1977), Schofield (2010, 2013), and Laks (2022) have sought to pin down Aristotle's attitude towards the *Laws* in his own *Politics*. There appears to be a scholarly consensus that Plato was writing the *Laws* in the late 350s BCE, during which time Aristotle was a member (in his 20s) of the Academy. Aristotle shows an extensive awareness of the work: *Politics* 2.6 provides an *explicit* critique of the *Laws*, including a discussion of the genre of the Socratic dialogue. But throughout the *Politics*, one finds dozens of passages in which Aristotle is in *implicit* dialogue with many of the central proposals of the *Laws*. Clearly, such inter-textual references show that Plato's *Laws* profoundly influences Aristotle and that he incorporates significant concepts and discussions from the *Laws* into his *Politics*. But it does not seem far-fetched to imagine that the influence goes in the opposite direction also, namely that Aristotle and Plato discussed and debated topics examined in the *Laws* and that the *Laws* itself shows evidence of such engagement with Aristotle. Indeed, as Laks (2000) puts it, one may wonder "whether there is already something truly Aristotelian in the *Laws"* (275). In order to consider the bi-directional influence between Plato's *Laws* and what will become Aristotle's *Politics*, I examine how the two works are in inter-textual dialogue about communal and/or private property, city fortifications, and the nature of the mixed and/or middle constitution(s)—all topics connected to the Spartan constitution—to see if we can discern not only Plato's influence on Aristotle, but also possible traces of Aristotle's criticisms in Plato's own discussions in the *Laws*.

Emiliano A. Panciera (Newcastle): *Caught in Between: A Reflection on Aristoxenus' Political Philosophy*

Aristoxenus of Tarentum, also known as Aristoxenus the Musician, was a fourth century BCE scholar, active during the transition from the Classical to the Hellenistic world. Frequently associated with the Pythagorean and Peripatetic schools, in the past, he was renowned for his contribution to the study of music and was credited with producing over 453 books (i.e. Suda, s.v. Ἀριστόξενος, A 3927 Adler). Today, he is primarily remembered for his theories on music, his remark on the "barbarisation" of Poseidonia (i.e. Aristox. Fr. 124 Wehrli), and the numerous fragments about Pythagoras and Pythagorean philosophy (e.g. Aristox. Fr. 17 Wehrli).

Although his studies were highly regarded in antiquity, after some revisionist studies in the last century (e.g. Wehrli 1948), his fragments on Pythagoras and Pythagorean philosophy were dismissed as apologetic in nature, designed to discredit figures such as Plato and Aristotle in favour of Pythagoras. However, a first effort to rehabilitate his name has been recently carried out by C. A. Huffman, who published a critical edition of Aristoxenus' *The Pythagorean Precepts* and *The Pythagorean Way of Life* (i.e., Huffman 2019).

Building on C. A. Huffman's innovative contribution, this paper re-evaluates Aristoxenus' political theory and philosophy. It examines his literary production on education, ethics and morals, avoiding preexisting preconceptions on his apologetic intention, with the aim of establishing a fresh understanding of Aristoxenus' intellectual and political position.

Ultimately, this study seeks to push forward our understanding of the philosophical and political landscape of the Greek world in a time of profound transformation and change, such as the second half of the fourth century BCE.

Carolina Ravanelli (Cambridge): *Totalitarianism and Plato's Republic: Fascist Appropriations of Political Thought*

This paper investigates the Fascist reception of Plato's *Republic*, focusing on how totalitarian intellectuals and educators selectively reinterpreted Platonic political philosophy to serve ideological ends. As a matter of fact, Fascist theorists often presented the *Republic* as a prophetic text that anticipated a corporatist, hierarchical and disciplinarian state: the emphasis on the philosopher-king was reframed in Mussolinian terms, where leadership was conceived as the fusion of wisdom, charisma and absolute
authority. Similarly, Plato's tripartite division of the soul was mapped onto Fascist notions of class and function, legitimising a rigidly stratified society.

These appropriations were widely disseminated in both official texts and educational reforms. Marino Gentile explicitly claimed that Plato's *Republic* foreshadowed the ethical state of Fascism, while articles in
Giuseppe Bottai's journal *Critica fascista* interpreted the *philosophos basileus* as a precursor of the *duce*. The *Carta della Scuola* (1939), drafted under Bottai's direction, promoted civic virtue, obedience and sacrifice for the collective as classical ideals to be realised in Fascist youth, while Giovanni Gentile reconfigured the Platonic *paideia* into a pedagogical programme of "ethical community". Even secondary-school manuals of the 1930s presented Plato as the philosopher of hierarchy and order, contrasting him with the democratic "decadence" of the rest of Athens and Athenians.

At the same time, Fascist interpreters like Emilio Bodrero emphasised a crucial divergence: unlike in Plato's *Republic*, where civic participation was imposed as a duty, the modern Fascist Italian was expected to develop a spontaneous yearning for participation in the life of the nation. Moreover, Fascist theorists appropriated the Platonic concept of the *idea* itself in order to define the ideals of *patria* and *nazione*, conceived as transcendent and immutable values of their entire political project.

Engaging with the conference themes of *Ancient Political Philosophy* and *Classical Heritage*, this paper argues that Fascist uses of Plato reveal the malleability of classical texts within modern ideological projects: Platonic philosophy became a contested resource, simultaneously weaponised to legitimise repression and mobilised to promote utopian visions of social order. By tracing these distortions, the paper contributes to broader reflections on the ethics of classical reception and the enduring vulnerability of classical thought to political instrumentalisation.

PANEL 60 Queer 7: Homoerotic Desires. Chair: *tbc venue: #tbc

Samuel Woodward (Oxford): *Sappho at the Symposium: Is Platonic Eros Lesbian?*

In Plato's *Symposium,* Diotima espouses a mode of desire oriented towards the good (*to agathon*) and happiness (*eudaimonia*). Her Eros aims to overcome the radical disparity between mortal soul and immortal *eudaimonia* through unceasing procreative activity. As mortal beings with mortal souls, leaving something behind after we die through reproduction is how we achieve a vicarious immortality – we can "share in" the gods' *eudaimonia* (*Symp.* 208b5) – through the (pro)creation of literal or intellectual children. The offspring of the poets is given as an example of intellectual children which grant their progenitors a form of immortality through the continuation of tradition (209c7-d5).

Diotima's Eros has received extensive attention, but its origins far less. Previous scholarship (focusing predominantly on Plato's *Phaedrus*) has viewed Plato's reception of Sappho as a challenge to androcentrism and suggested that certain aspects of Sappho's doctrine of Eros anticipate Plato's. Unappreciated, however, is the profound resemblance between their two modalities of desire which indicates Sappho's deeper influence on Plato's *Symposium*, a literary dramatisation of a setting in which the presence of Sappho's poetry might be expected. This paper will argue that a comparison of fragments 58 and 98 with Socrates' speech in the *Symposium* shows that Sappho's Eros and its aspiratory relationship to abstracted good(s) inform Plato's sexual discourse by providing a female modality of desire naturally suited to his erotic philosophy. The female realm of childbirth that Diotima adopts as an analogue for the production of discourse in pursuit of immortality can be shown to be prefigured by Sappho's discourse of reproduction and poetic *kleos.*

As a classicist from Manchester researching the intersection of lyric poetry and philosophy in two archetypally queer classical authors, my paper is suited to the interdisciplinary "Queer Classics" theme of this conference.

Alexander von Lennep (Oxford): *No Greek Homosexuality? -- Ancient and Modern Compatibilism*

My paper discusses how to speak and write about 'Greek Homosexuality'. Interpretation has always tended between essentialist and constructivist perspectives. While FOUCAULT and DAVIDSON stress the socially constructed character of same-sex practices, others argue for a universal, 'natural' continuity of same-sex desire. How interpreters place themselves on this spectrum determines the modes of speech on the issue of sexual behaviour: How far can we make use of modern and queer terminology? The bipolar dichotomous framework, however, overlooks that ancient sources —— most notably Aristophanes' speech on *eros* in Plato's *Symposium* already offer a mediating perspective: same-sex desire appears here both, as innate and as shaped by social norms at the same time. My paper argues that essentialism and constructivism should not be treated as mutually exclusive but as complementary levels of human sexual behaviour. This reading allows us to take ancient categories seriously without projecting modern identities onto them, while still acknowledging the cultural variability of desire. Thus, historical similarities enable empathy and comparison, whereas differences make the study of ancient sexuality meaningful and productive.

Khushi Jain (Trinity College, Dublin): *Ovid's Athis and Lycabas (Met. 5.47-73)*

Ovid's tale of Athis and Lycabas (*Met.* 5.47-73) is mainly known for its intertextual aspects and existing studies have almost exclusively concerned themselves with its relationship to its primary models, the Nisus-Euryalus episodes from the *Aeneid* (5.286-361 and 9.176-449). This should not be the only way of approaching Athis and Lycabas. Within the *Metamorphoses*, Athis and Lycabas have the important distinctions of being the very first instance of a same-sex relationship and one of the text's rare mutually devoted couples. A close reading of their 27-line-long love story is important for a comprehensive understanding of Ovidian desire.

The description of Athis' beauty (5.47-53), with which Ovid begins, is an unfocalized passage with an erotic undercurrent that doesn't objectify him. This is achieved by avoiding similes and analogies comparing him to things like statues and flowers. Active-passive and subject-object dichotomies are repeatedly overturned in the episode. In images of death too there is no monumentalizing, aestheticizing or

fixing. Athis' dying body jerks (*iactantem* 5.59) and exhales (*exhalantem* 5.62), and Lycabas' dying body is busy searching, leaning (*circumspexit*, *adclinavit* 5.72) and bearing (*tulit* 5.73). Ovid is constantly imbuing movement and through it, a kind of life, into these two bodies. On the other hand, Perseus, the hero responsible for the deaths, is reduced to a log (*stipite* 5.57) and a sickle-sword (*harpen* 5.69). In the end, Ovid chooses tactility over vision for his lovers, marked by the final description of Athis' death, present in its absence (5.70-3). In the context of the ongoing battle in the halls of Cepheus, the love and deaths of Athis and Lycabas form a poignant vignette of the serious, innocent tragedies of the violence. In the context of the erotic world of the *Metamorphoses*, they are significant alternatives to objectifying gazes and hierarchical relationships.

Mathijs Clement (Cambridge): *Queer moments of faith: Writing crisis and queering time in Paulinus of Pella*

In his Confessions, Augustine refers to his love for God as a belated love: 'Late I loved you, beauty old and new; late I loved you' (10.27). Augustine's belated love quickly became a textual model for other texts. In his late fifth-century poem Eucharisticus, Paulinus of Pella refers to his own 'late' love for God (see v.443). It is Paulinus' belated love, itself expressed with a reference to an earlier text, that I want to focus on in this presentation. The relatively little-studied Eucharisticus is an autobiographical poem full of desires, but with little achievements. Its author narrates his life as a series of failed attempts at fleeing, and as a missed opportunity to love God in time. In this presentation, I want to use the theoretical concept of 'queer temporality' to think about the non-linear desires of a poem structured around a very linear narrative pattern –the story of one's life from childhood to old age. I will argue that Paulinus is staging a moment of crisis as the moment of creativity. He places himself both in and out of time, and envisages himself as a future dead person, someone whose autobiography will be read by later generations. The poet's frustration at being too late to realise his desires, becomes in this reading the creative fulfilment of those desires. Whereas the concept of 'queer temporality' is normally used to lend (anachronistic) agency to those people whose desires could not be expressed in their own time, I want to explore its usefulness as a religious concept here. In doing so, I will argue that the stuckness of perpetually thwarted desire symbolises the need to queer religious desire, seeing desire as a longing for something that is other-worldly and unrealisable within the 'normal' time frame of one's earthly life.

PANEL 61: Texts and Knowledge. Chair: *tbc venue: #tbc

Rebecca Sleap-Ireland (Independent Researcher): *Systems in the Shadows: Using Plato's Cave to Understand Information Resistance*

Plato's Cave allegory offers more than philosophical insight—it provides a blueprint for understanding how information systems shape and constrain human perception. This paper applies systems thinking methodology to map the Cave's interconnected elements, revealing feedback loops and systemic dynamics that help explain both ancient and contemporary resistance to new knowledge.

Using systems analysis, I examine three key scenarios from *Republic* 514a-520a: the prisoners' original state, the process of liberation, and the freed prisoner's return. Each scenario reveals different systemic configurations—from the stabilizing mechanisms (chains, controlled information flow) that maintain the prisoners' closed worldview, to the systemic responses triggered when new information threatens

established beliefs. This analysis demonstrates how the prisoners' resistance to change serves a system-preserving function, protecting their constructed reality from destabilizing influences.

By mapping the dynamics of Plato's cave, we can gain insight into the mechanisms that sustain belief systems despite challenging evidence, providing a valuable analytical framework for understanding modern problems such as political polarization and the persistence of misinformation.

This interdisciplinary approach demonstrates the enduring relevance of classical philosophy for contemporary challenges, showing how ancient texts can provide analytical tools for understanding complex modern phenomena. Rather than simply interpreting Plato's intentions, this methodology reveals the Cave as a functioning system whose dynamics help explain why educational and political enlightenment efforts often face such persistent resistance.

Ben Sumpter (Cornwall Archaeological Society): *A First Critical Translation of Britain's Earliest Written History*

Διόδωρος, the celebrated 1st century BC Greek historian of Ἀγύριον in Sicily is responsible for preserving Britain's earliest attestation in the historical record. However in his Βιβλιοθήκη Ἱστορική (5.21-22) he states this information only as a secondary source. Diodorus' primary source was Πυθέας, the 4th century BC explorer, writer and scientist of Μασσαλία (modern Marseille). Pythéas was a "[Christopher] Columbus with a flavour of Darwin" and the earliest literate traveller whose account has survived in detail that describes the British Isles.

Written in the c.320s BC, its content is noteworthy because of its emphasis placed on tinworking, a phenomenon unique in the British Isles to Devon and Cornwall. His other information concerns social anthropology and details of agriculture. From an archaeological perspective Pythéas' account falls within the British Iron Age; technically making this epoch not truly prehistoric but proto-historic.

Pythéas' account has received wide recognition in literature however all translations from its Ancient Greek source into modern languages have been free and do not discuss the challenges of polysemy, syncretism and homonymy in the source texts. Furthermore, the critical texts established by Teubner (1880s) and Les Belle Lettres (2015) are found to have variances with its prototype manuscripts, which are now available for digital study online. These attest additional details ignored by the published editions that significantly add to the interpretation of linguistic frame and offer alternative nuance to translations.

This paper presents the first fully critical translation of Britain's earliest source text using full morpheme-by-morpheme interlinear glosses to the standards set by the Leipzig Glossing Rules. Each word is then translated considering the traditional lexicon of Liddell-Scott-Jones and modern equivalents such as by Cambridge, then corresponded with the recent etymological studies by Leiden.

The paper addresses the Conference themes of papyrology and pedagogy. The study has made use of prototype manuscripts wherever possible and presents its findings in light of pedagogical approaches to linguistics.

Jason Morris (CripAntiquity): *The Tyranny of the Line: Mathematics, Education, and the Blind in the Roman World*

Diodorus the Stoic, who was blind, lived in my house for many years. But he also

proctored the discipline of geometry, --something which one would scarcely contemplate could be done without eyes—by verbally instructing the students in where and how to inscribe each line. (Cicero, *Tusc*. 5.113)

In his *Tusculanae Disputationes*, Cicero informs us that blind people in the Roman world participated in politics, wrote books, and rather surprisingly, taught geometry. For a society that emphasizes STEM even as it grapples with questions of equity for the disabled, Cicero's remarks represent both a challenge and a conundrum. On the one hand it challenges modern educators to make room for the blind. On the other, it raises questions because Cicero does not provide a lot of details about how the blind wrote books on or taught geometry.

Drawing on sources that include Cicero's dialogues, the poetry of Martial, the manuals of Columella and the agrimensor Balbus, as well as archaeological evidence, this paper explores the nature of Roman mathematical education and the ways in which blind people participated in it. Proceeding in two parts, this paper first explores the stages of ancient education and the contexts in which mathematical education took place. The second part of the paper explores the tools and techniques used to teach mathematics in antiquity to demonstrate the ways in which blind people could both study and teach geometry. In doing so, the paper asks educators to reconsider the ways in which we teach subjects ranging from Latin to mathematics, and the limitations that we place on the blind.

PANEL 62: Homer and Homeric Exegesis in Latin Literature. Chair: Thomas Phillips (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Pietro Gabriele Tozzi (Trinity College, Dublin): *Poetry and Philosophy Combined: The First Simile of the De Rerum Natura*

In epic poetry the first extended simile usually has a programmatic character (Feeney 2014). Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* is no exception to this tradition. The first programmatic simile of the poem (1.271-97), comparing the destruction caused by the wind to that of rivers, establishes the main feature of Lucretian similes: a tendency to compare two things that are already quite similar to highlight how the illustrandum and the image work in exactly the same way. Despite serving very different purposes, Lucretius' simile is modelled on three Homeric ones: *Il.* 2.144-9 for the wind half of the simile and *Il.* 5.87-92 and *Il*. 11.492-7 for the river one. Analysis of the similes shows that Lucretius considered Homer an important literary model but also reveals a demythologising element since Zeus, present in all three of the similes from the *Iliad*, is erased in the *DRN*. Moreover, the choice of *Il*. 2.144-9 as model, itself a programmatic simile in the *Iliad*, reveals how Lucretius combines his poetic and philosophical models by 'correcting' and adjusting the Homeric material to the Epicurean world view.

Stefano Cianciosi (Oxford): *Homeric Exegesis in Statius' Thebaid. Selected Readings*

This paper analyses selected passages from Statius' *Thebaid* through the lens of ancient Homeric exegesis, arguing that the poet not only engages the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but also shows awareness of critical debates surrounding them as preserved in the Homeric scholia. Like Virgil before him, Statius responds to those criticisms, at times in ways that suggest his own direct engagement with these exegetical traditions.

This approach complements Herbert Juhnke's foundational study (*Homerisches in römischer Epik flavischer Zeit*, Munich 1972), which documented

the structural and thematic centrality of Homer in Flavian epic, by considering instead the reception of Homer through ancient scholarship, a dimension Juhnke did not address systematically. It develops a strand present in previous contributions such as Sergio Casali's 'Imboscate Notturne' (in A. Chaniotis, ed., *La Nuit. Imaginaire et réalités nocturnes dans le monde gréco-roman*, 209-37. Genève 2018), offering for the first time a more sustained treatment of the issue.

The paper situates this inquiry within recent developments in the study of Statius: Apostolia Alepidou's 2021 article 'Thetis in Identity Crisis' (*Mnemosyne* 74: 799-824) has shown how the poet engages with ancient Homeric criticism in his *Achilleid*. Scholarship on other intertexts continues to grow: Ovid's importance for the *Thebaid* has long been recognised, but Tommaso Spinelli's monograph (*Statius and Ovid: Poetics, Politics and Intermediality in the Thebaid*. Cambridge 2024) has now provided the first book-length treatment of this dimension, underscoring the breadth of Statius' intertextuality. The present paper complements this work by shifting attention back to Homer and to the interpretative traditions that mediated his reception.

Ultimately, Statius' engagement with Homeric exegesis emerges not as antiquarian curiosity but as a vital element of his poem, positioning the *Thebaid* at once as heir to and as commentator on two foundational Greek epics.

Edward Nolan (Taiwan National University): *Pliny the Younger's Homer*

This paper argues that intertextual engagement with Homeric epic, an important vehicle for generating meaning in Pliny the Younger's *Epistulae*, is most fruitfully examined as the figuration of Pliny, his addressees, and other figures from his epistolary world as Homeric characters including Achilles, Odysseus, and Nestor. Monographs by Ilaria Marchesi and Christopher Whitton have underlined the importance of Plinian intertextuality. Scholars have approached the subject both narrowly, in terms of explicit citations of literary texts, as in Katrin Schwerdtner's survey, and more expansively to include interactions with non-literary texts, as in the chapters in Margot Neger and Spyridon Tzounakas' recent edited volume. In addition to providing a focus on Homer that has been absent from previous work, this paper liberates Plinian intertextuality from a narrow passage-to-passage based approach, which allows a broader and deeper engagement between Pliny and Homeric epic.

Consider the reference to the *Odyssey* in *Epistulae* 5.19. Pliny asks that Zosimus, his freedman, stay at the addressee's estate at Forum Iulii to recover from a recurrent illness. Pliny opens the letter by confessing his own "indulgence" towards his household, which he defends by recalling "that Homeric phrase" (*illud Homericum*) that describes Odysseus as "gentle as a father" (πατὴρ δ᾽ ὥς ἤπιος ἦεν). In its Homeric contexts (*Od.* 2.47, 234; 5.12), the phrase rebukes the Ithacans for not coming to Telemachus' aid despite gentle treatment by Odysseus as king. But Pliny refers to his own behaviour not as king but as *dominus* towards the (formerly) enslaved, showing that the reference is not to specific passages but to Odysseus in general. While Pliny thereby evokes Odysseus' relationship with "good" slaves like Eurycleia and Eumaeus, the examples of the punishment meted out to "bad" ones like Melantho and Melanthius is likewise available to those reading against the grain.

PANEL 63: Classical Heritage 1: Museums to Modern Culture. Chair: Sharon Marshall (Exeter); venue: #tbc

David Rini (Oxford): *Tracking the history of gold-glass, sarcophagi, and sepulchral inscriptions in the Wilshere Collection*

Although the key items in the Wilshere Collection are included in nineteenth-century catalogues of early Christian gold glass, as well as twentieth-century compilations of Jewish and Christian inscriptions and late Roman sarcophagi, the systematic catalogue edited by Dr. Susan Walker in collaboration with Professor Sean Leatherbury and myself (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 2017) represents the first comprehensive attempt to study the collection almost in its entirety. The benefits of this approach are noteworthy, especially concerning the collection's history and sources.

Two prominent collections from the Southern Italian Enlightenment played a significant role in forming the collection assembled by the esteemed collector Charles Wilshere (1814-1906). Both collections shared similar histories, having been dispersed following the overthrow of the Bourbon monarchy in Naples in 1860. In late eighteenth century Rome, mismanagement of holy relics and a consistent undervaluation of the significance of the Randanini Catacomb on Via Appia Pignatelli in the nineteenth century resulted in the loss of important artifacts. This includes early-Christian gold glass, Jewish inscriptions, and Roman sarcophagi, which transitioned from state ownership to private ownership.

My paper will shed light on a crucial eighteenth-century archival source from the Vatican Library that is essential for understanding these developments. Additionally, a collection of documents from the State Archive of Rome serves as an important resource for exploring the collecting history of several items. Finally, letters from Wilshere to archaeologist Giovanni Battista de Rossi (1822-1894) and Jesuit Father Raffaele Garrucci (1812-1885), preserved in the Vatican Library and the Archivio Storico of the Provincia Euro-Mediterranea of the Jesuit Society in Rome, provide insight into a kindly, yet forceful and ambitious man.

Yona Siero (Manchester): *From Human to Monster: The Dehumanization of Mummified People in Modern Media*

The objective of this research is to examine the dehumanization and fetishization of mummified individuals in contemporary media, through reception studies. Mummification was a process employed by many civilizations, including the ancient Egyptians, to prepare the deceased for their afterlife (The Australian Museum n.d.). Mummified remains are frequently exhibited. The British Museum alone houses over 100 mummified individuals (Mulla 2025). Museums are starting to prefer the term ‘mummified person’, as ‘mummy’ can be considered dehumanizing (Museums Association 2023). The dehumanization of mummified people has been an issue throughout history, as evidenced by Victorian-era ‘unwrapping parties’ (Bocco 2022). In popular culture, the depiction of mummified people has shifted from being regarded as historical figures to being portrayed as monsters, as illustrated by the 1932 film *The Mummy* (Freund; Natural History Museum of Utah 2021).

This shift in reception and perspective on mummified individuals is a relevant consideration for museums, archaeologists and other researchers. The following contemporary examples of ‘mummies’ will be analyzed through the lens of reception studies: the Inca Princess from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* 1997 (Pressman), Imhotep in *The Mummy* 1999 and 1932 (Sommers; Freund), Cleo de Nile from *Monster High*

2010 (Monster High) and Ramses in *Ramses the Damned: The Passion of Cleopatra* 2017 (Rice and Rice 2017). It will be discussed if they are depicted solely as monsters, or if they are well rounded characters, and to what degree they are fetishized or rooted in stereotypes, and how this has changed over time. It is important to consider the role that xenophobia and racism play in this depiction.

By discussing these examples, it is my hope to make researchers aware of contemporary medias depictions of mummified individuals, and how this could potentially impact the way that exhibitions and research are perceived by the public.

Hanjun Shi (London): *Creating Another Atlantis in the Underground: The Classical Greek Narration in East Asian Videogame Genshin Impact*

The Graeco-Roman classical influences in digital games have become a significant aspect of both classical and game studies today. Previous research usually focuses on the usage of classics in games produced and played in North America and Europe, often overlooking East Asian games that feature classical elements. As a Chinese company, HoYoVerse developed the role-playing game Genshin Impact, depicting the 'traveller' in adventuring the fantasy world 'Teyvat' to find their lost sibling, which incorporated Ancient Greek cultural references within its storylines and allowed players to engage with on-screen events and explore classical-inspired narratives.

The case study examined the use of Atlantis mythology in Genshin Impact's storytelling. Through a dynamic reimagining of Plato's philosophy, the video game created an alternative underground Atlantis within its magical world. This Atlantis is depicted with stunning remnants of classical Greek columns, rich narration and dialogues involving Greek mythology figures (Helios, Phaethon, Ouroboros), and breathtaking cutscenes showing the beauty of the marvellous palace beneath an abyss. Genshin Impact offered players a genuine cultural exploration of Greek traditions, despite the game's East Asian origins. This trend reflects a cultural pattern that moved away from the anachronism and multiculturalism typical of Japanese animation from the 1980s. Combining European classical and medieval aesthetics with East Asian moral values, such as the significance of friendship, righteousness, and overcoming obstacles, this trend gained popularity among young entertainment consumers. It also contributed to the reception of Graeco-Roman classical culture in East Asian society. Concerning this modern cultural approach, classicists can envisage a more inclusive and respectful way to engage with classical elements within non-European cultural contexts.

Through the depiction of the classical narration of Genshin Impact and the modern receptions of the concept of Atlantis, this article explores the themes of classical heritage, particularly in the fields of classical antiquity and its modern reception within video game pop culture.

Olga Nikonenko (London): *Too Disturbing for Display? Roman Sexual Violence in Museums* (Lightning talk)

This lightning talk exposes a troubling contradiction in museum practice: museums eagerly invite children to role-play gladiators and celebrate Roman conquest, yet they systematically erase the sexual violence that was equally central to Roman power.

The case of British queen Boudica is especially striking. Her daughters' rape—the catalyst for Britain's most significant anti-Roman uprising—was openly discussed in children's history books through the 1980s and 1990s. Today, however, museum displays speak vaguely of 'personal grievances' while children swing replica swords

and wear gladiator helmets. We celebrate Rome's physical violence while rendering its sexual violence unspeakable.

This selective silence creates dangerous myths. Sexual violence wasn't rare in Roman civilisation—it was structural. From the foundational Rape of the Sabine Women to systematic assault as imperial and colonial policies, rape was a tool of conquest and power. By sanitising these realities, museums inadvertently reinforce contemporary rape culture and keep alive romanticised visions of 'great civilizations' that still influence politics today.

Other institutions have evolved. The Imperial War Museum now addresses sexual violence in modern warfare. Museums about slavery discuss rape as systematic oppression. Yet Roman collections—among our most popular displays—remain stuck in outdated ideas of 'protecting' visitors through silence.

This talk opens a discussion about pedagogy and ethics: How can museums acknowledge sexual violence responsibly? Why is gladiator violence suitable for children but sexual violence is not? And what happens—politically and educationally—when we exclude Rome's rape culture from public history?

Skylar Masuda (Fulbright Türkiye): *After Repatriation: Documenting the Display of Repatriated Artifacts in Turkish Museums* (Lightning Talk)

In the past few years, thousands of illegally sourced artifacts have been removed from international collections and repatriated to the Republic of Türkiye. News stories sensationalize the announcements of their return, but what happens to these artifacts after repatriation? My 2024-2025 Fulbright research project aimed to document displays of repatriated artifacts in Turkish museums. Analyzing these displays reveals international divides in museum practices and goals, pointing us to the politics of looting, repatriation, and curation. I will share case studies from museums around the country and my findings from interviews with museum professionals, repatriation scholars, and local visitors. These objects represent complex ancient and modern histories. How have these museums evolved to fit them?

PANEL 64 tbc

tbc

PANEL 65: Roman-Jewish Studies. Chair: *tbc venue: #tbc

Shoni Lavie-Driver (Oxford): *Latin in the rabbinic literature of the Roman Empire*

The rabbinic literature produced in the third–seventh centuries in Roman Syria-Palaestina, as an enormous corpus of texts written by Roman provincials in languages (Aramaic and Hebrew) native to the region, provides a rich window into provincial life in the Roman Empire. However, disciplinary divides and the difficulties of dealing with this complex body of literature mean that it is rarely studied by Classicists.

In line with the conference theme 'The Near East and the Classical World', I propose to explore the presence of the imperial language *par excellence*, Latin, in rabbinic literature.

Latin (or, as rabbinic texts call it, 'the language of Rome') appears in two main ways. Firstly, a significant number of loanwords were naturalised into the Aramaic and Hebrew speech reflected in these texts. Identifying these terms – often complicated by their transmission by scribes unfamiliar with Latin and the absence of

vowels in Hebrew script – helps reconstruct the main avenues through which these Jews encountered Latin.

Secondly, rabbinic rulings and stories sometimes explicitly use or discuss Latin. For example, one rabbi proclaimed that Greek is fit for poetry, but Latin for war. Another rabbi explains a religious story through a parable about provincials accidentally hailing the *praefectus* as 'domine' rather than the emperor. Such passages allow us to form an idea of the cultural associations of Latin.

To ask how Jews living in Roman Syria Palaestina viewed Latin is to ask how Roman provincials viewed Roman culture and the Empire. Was Latin solely the language of foreign oppressors – though, following 212, these Jews were Roman citizens – or also a prestigious language of culture? My paper builds on research, such as that of J.N. Adams, on language and identity in the Roman Empire, and helps to bring rabbinic literature back into the fold of the Classical World.

Thomas Moffitt (Nottingham): *Prudentius' temple for peace and Virgil's temple for Octavian: a conscious mirroring*

An important thing to note in any conversation about Prudentius' *Psychomachia* is that it has heavy Virgilian influences: Prudentius saw himself as doing for Virgil what Virgil did for Homer at making at making this epic story fit into his current world. Perhaps the most obvious example is that the opening of the poem, *Christe, graues hominum semper miserate labores* is a direct parallel to *Aeneid* 6.56: *Phoebe, grauis Troiae semper miserate labores*. One aspect which is often not noted for its Virgilian nature is the temple built in the closing stages of the *Pyschomachia* and put under the care of the last virtue to appear, Sapientia. The conclusion of the *Psychomachia* is often assumed to be a largely Biblical scene, drawing widely from Hebrew sources for its imagery. Building upon Hardie (2018) and Pelttari (2019), however, I will seek to demonstrate that there is more to Saptientia's temple than a reference to the New Jerusalem of the Apocalypse of John. Instead, I propose that Sapientia's temple is given prominence to mirror the temple that Virgil promises Octavian Augustus in *Georgics* 3.16: *in medio mihi Caesar erit templumque tenebit*. In much the same way as Kirichenko (2013) argues that the *Aeneid* forms the ultimate, if not ideal, fulfilment of that promise to Octavian and provides an ideological temple to mirror physical sites like that of the Temple of Apollo Palatinus, I shall provide evidence that the *Psychomachia* is dedicated to the legacy of Theodosius' political and religious legacy as the symbol of a united, Christian Roman Empire. I believe that this discussion around the newly Christian Hispano-Roman claims on parts of the classical world and their prioritisation of certain literatures would tie in well to the themes around heritage, especially regarding Christian violence against all things pagan in the period.

Emily Howe (Royal Holloway): *Visions of Empire: Individual Voices on the Jewish Existence Under Rome's Shadow in Josephus's Bellum Judaicum*

The *Bellum Judaicum*, Josephus's earliest major historical work, describes the events of the Jewish War. Produced by a participant and eyewitness, it offers unique access to provincial perceptions of Roman imperial power. Within which, Josephus provides a series of speeches from leading political figures. These speeches arise at particularly dramatic moments, where negotiations between individuals, communities and imperial powers are most fragile.

Scholarship has typically treated these speeches as rhetorical inventions, focusing upon their possible historicity and emphasising Josephus's authorial voice. Coupled with conventional analysis through ethnic-religious frameworks, traditional approaches have often flattened the complex negotiations which occur within them, of

self-identification, survival and resistance, obscuring the diversity of provincial responses to Roman rule.

Contrary to this conventional treatment, I contend that each speech presents an individual perspective of the Roman imperial system, offering distinctive narratives on how a Jewish individual or community ought to exist under Rome.

This paper will engage with the speeches of Agrippa II, Josephus in Jerusalem, and Eleazar ben Yair's at Masada. I shall trace perceptions of, and engagements with, Rome, to contrast Agrippa's pragmatic accommodation of corrupt Roman officials, Josephus' beseeching to return to the Temple to restore God, and Eleazar's belief in the incompatibility of Roman-Jewish relations necessitating resistance through death. Though these contrasting theories emerge from similar circumstances and engagement with the Romans, they produce radically different conceptions of how the Empire functions and how they ought to respond to Rome.

By analysing these speeches as products of individual speakers, rather than as single authorial inventions, this paper reveals the complexity of provincial perceptions of, and responses to, political philosophy under the Roman Empire. This paper contributes towards the study of Ancient Political Philosophy in the Levant (Ancient Near East) by illuminating how imperial subjects perceive, respond, legitimise and critique power.

SUNDAY 12 APRIL - SESSION 9: 11.30-13.30

PANEL 66: Inscriptions and Audiences 3: Religion. Chair: *tbc venue: #tbc

Maria Sandali (Athens): *Achilles as a healer during Roman times: the case of the White Island*

The purpose of this announcement is to present Achilles as a healer during Roman times in the Black Sea region. In this area the worship of Achilles as a healer is traced in the White Island, an Olbian colony, which is in its turn a Miletus' colony. The idea came from an inscription of Termessus, a city-state in Pisidia in the north Asia Minor. In this inscription (TAM III, 1 348: ᾽Αχιλλέως ᾽Ιητῆρος), which is devoted by a man with the name "Marcus Aurelius Artemon", something that helps us for the inscription's chronology during the reign of emperor Marcus Aurelius, in the middle 2nd century AD. So, we are talking about a person who obtained the Roman citizenship and tried to continue the custom of the Romans to devote to Achilles. He devotes his inscription to Achilles the Healer, who have helped him, his mother in law and his son to be safe and protected. In the case of the White Island there is a long literary tradition, which provide us with information about the island's location, which is in the mouth of Danube, the island's name etymology, it is "white" because of the white stones or the white snakes, the existence of a temple and a statue of Achilles. Achilles is a mythological figure with a long history in Greco-Roman antiquity. The areas of his worship are scattered and the paradox consists in the fact that Achilles has a pan-Hellenic literary reach, while his cult is, mainly, limited to the Black Sea. In the region of the Black Sea, the presence of Achilles is strongly identified, which is proven by literary and inscriptional testimonies, related to his existence and his worship.

Carmen Burgio (University of Ghent; University of Gröningen): *Inscriptions and Interactions in Sacred Space: Ritual Norms as Event*

Inscriptions in ancient Greek sanctuaries were never simply static texts. They were embedded within ritual landscapes, shaping how worshippers moved, perceived, and interacted with sacred space. This paper explores how inscribed ritual norms could operate simultaneously as practical guides and as experiential markers that mediated between human and divine realms. I propose that such inscriptions be understood not only as regulatory documents but also as "event boundaries" – points of transition that framed religious experience and heightened awareness at crucial moments of ritual practice.

The Amphiareion at Oropos, a renowned incubation sanctuary where visitors sought healing and divine counsel through dream oracles, will serve as a case study. A ritual norm inscription *I.Oropos* 277 (ca. 386-374 BCE) outlined sacrificial procedures, rules of purity, and priestly duties, but its significance went beyond regulation. Its likely placement before the temple and altar suggests that it also marked a threshold within the already sacred environment of the sanctuary. It distinguished levels of sacredness: while the sanctuary was sacred, the altar and temple—sites of direct communication with the gods—were especially sacred. Positioned at this juncture, the stele prompted visitors to pause, read, and reflect before proceeding, turning the encounter with the inscription into an essential part of ritual preparation. In this way, the norms functioned as a spatial event boundary, simultaneously delineating sacred zones, instructing worshippers, and signaling their transition into a more intense sphere of divine interaction.

At the same time, these norms created a temporal event boundary. Their prominent placement required visitors to pause, read, and reorient themselves, shifting from ordinary activities into the new "event" of divine consultation through incubation. This compelled change of focus aligns with cognitive models such as the "doorway effect," in which transitions in space or task prompt an update of one's mental framework, thereby preparing individuals for new experiences. By integrating spatial, temporal, and experiential dimensions, this paper situates inscriptions like *I.Oropos* 277 within broader debates on audience engagement with inscriptions in sanctuaries. It contributes to the conference theme Inscriptions and their Audiences by showing how inscriptions were active mediators of sacred experience – regulating religious behaviour, marking thresholds, and shaping the embodied process of connecting with the divine.

PANEL 67 (Workshop): Cross-Cultural Receptions Workshop. Chair and organiser: Cynthia Liu (Oxford, American Academy in Rome); venue: #tbc

Scholarly interest in Classics beyond Greece and Rome, and Latin beyond Europe, has increased over the past three decades. This 'global turn' (Bromberg 2021) has also seen a spike in research on Classics and Asia within the last decade (e.g. Sienkiewicz and J. Liu 2021; Zhang 2023; Mutschler 2023; Waldo forthcoming). The workshop will expand our understanding of comparisons and connections between Greco-Roman and Ancient Chinese 'Classics' by proposing a new analytical framework for investigating their influences on early modern and modern literature and then testing this framework through 5 case studies (lightning talks).

European expansion and global missions (16th–19th c.) saw the ancient languages and literatures of Greece/Rome collide with China's. Scholars in both Europe and Asia sought to bridge the cultures, launching what would become the fields of Comparative Sino- Hellenic/Roman studies and Sinology. Their literary

production included translations of Classical Chinese texts into Latin (and European vernaculars), Chinese translations of Latin/Greek texts, and original writings shaped by both traditions.

When we consider the 'Classics' and 'Classical Reception' in this context, we must be aware of a plurality of antiquities and of Classical receptions wherein two separate antiquities are combined, compared, and refigured in each other's terms. Not only the literary and philosophical traditions of Greco-Roman antiquity but also that of ancient and medieval China shaped the Latin/Chinese texts under consideration. The framework which the workshop will explore, Cross-Classical Receptions, recognises the importance of Classical Chinese canon in the exchange between 'east' and 'west'. This approach interfaces with emphases in Classical Reception studies on bidirectionality in interactions between Classical texts and their receptions (Martindale 2013). In studying encounters between Greco-Roman and East Asian 'Classics', the workshop proposes instead dynamic multidirectionality, deploying comparative lenses to reveal how any reception is illuminated by parallel receptions, and clarifying the 'omni-local status of the classical' (Greenwood 2013). This answers Critical Classical Reception's call (Hanink 2017) for tools to combat Eurocentrism in the field.

Junyang Ng: *Commonplace Books and Cross-Cultural Classical Reception* (lightning talk)

This lightning talk examines Domingo Fernández Navarrete's Spanish translation of the Chinese *Mingxin Baojian* and Alfonso Vagnone's Chinese rendering of the Latin *Parabolae*, exploring how commonplace books enabled the cross-cultural transmission of classical excerpts.

Cynthia Liu: *Translation of Poetry as Comparative Poetics* (lightning talk)

This lightning talk will discuss strategies employed by Latin translators of Chinese poetry, especially their appeals to Greco-Roman literary models.

Akihiko Watanabe: *Latin texts by Japanese and Filipino authors* (lightning talk)

This talk discusses 17th~20th century Latin texts (letters, orations, poems, dissertations) written by Japanese and Filipino people together with their contexts of production.

Jinyu Liu: *Epictetus' Enchridion and Ricci's Twenty-Five Sayings: A Comparative Textual Reading* (lightning talk)

This lightning talk demonstrates that far from being a conformative or accommodationist text, Ricci's Twenty-five Sayings, a Chinese adaptation of Epictetus' Enchridion, was a mindfully proactive text and even a provocative textual intervention.

Chris Waldo: *Diasporic Ramifications* (lightning talk)

This lightning talk discusses how Jesuit encounters and classical receptions in the East Asian diaspora both emphasize the instability of antiquity, intermingle Greco-Roman mythology and East Asian religious practices, and undermine the civilizational divide.

PANEL 68 Greek Tragedy. Chair: Manos Tsakiris (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Fernanda Borges da Costa (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro; Cambridge): *μυριητὴς χρόνος: Prophecy and the Seeds of Succession in Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound*

The tyrannical portrayal of Zeus in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* has long been a critical crux, often explained away as evidence of spurious authorship or of a theological framework deemed 'primitive'. This paper argues instead that Zeus's nature is a deliberate dramatic device, reflecting the play's deep engagement with the Greek cosmological tradition of cyclical succession. Central to this reading is the often-overlooked prophecy of Zeus's downfall (v. 944-946), a secret held by Prometheus.

I contend that this prophecy is the narrative embodiment of the cosmic cycle whereby Order emerges from Chaos. Prometheus's knowledge is not merely a bargaining chip; it is the genetic seed of the next divine order, planted within the chaotic present of Zeus's nascent and oppressive reign. The "countless length of time" (τὸν μυριετῆ χρόνον, v. 94) thus becomes the necessary temporal field for this seed to germinate, mirroring the vast spans of divine history in the Hesiodic tradition (*Theogony*, *Catalogue of Women*).

By focusing on this prophetic mechanism, the paper moves beyond static character analysis. It demonstrates how Aeschylus frames the conflict as a moment of tense, inevitable transition within a pre-ordained cosmic schema. This interpretation reconciles the Zeus of *Prometheus Bound* with his more revered portrayal elsewhere in the Aeschylean corpus, revealing a sophisticated theology that integrates the transitory nature of Zeus's order into a larger, perpetual cosmic system—a potent reflection for an Athenian audience contemplating the foundations and fragility of all power.

Hyeonseo Kim (Cornell): *Cassandra as Bilingual in Aeschylus' Agamemnon*

This paper argues that the Cassandra scenes in Aeschylus' Agamemnon constitute a rare moment in Greek tragedy where language difference is realistically represented. I show that the tragic convention of permitting non-Greek personae to speak Greek (Hall 1989; Colvin 1999) is not upheld in this play: Cassandra, a Trojan, speaks Greek only because she truly knows Greek (καὶ μὴν ἄγαν γ' Ἕλλην' ἐπίσταμαι φάτιν, 1254). The quality of Cassandra's speech has always attracted attention (e.g. Heath 2005; Brault 2009), but her linguistic capacities have gone largely unnoticed. I argue that Cassandra's bilingualism mirrors the irony of her role as prophet: she is a foreigner who will not be understood, even though she speaks Greek.

What secures this interpretation is the Cassandra scenes' unique focus on language difference and its impact on communication. I begin by reframing the initial exchange between Clytemnestra and Cassandra as a scene where the conditions of communication are examined: language difference is considered a barrier to communication (1060-1061), but one that can be overcome, either with non-verbal cues or the help of an interpreter (1061, 1062-1063). This commentary on language augments the irony of the subsequent scenes, where communication continues to fail despite the coryphaeus and Cassandra sharing a language (1112-1113, 1253).

Cassandra's command of Greek is confirmed in the coryphaeus' response to her speech post-mania: he expresses surprise at the fact that Cassandra speaks well (κυρεῖν λέγουσαν, 1201) despite 'having grown up heterophone' (τραφεῖσαν ἀλλόθρουν, 1200). At the very moment where Cassandra speaks Greek of her own accord, such an intradiegetic acknowledgement is necessary to preserve the realism of

the scene. This paper therefore proposes a new interpretation of the much-discussed lines, 1199-1201 (cf. Fraenkel 1950; Raeburn & Thomas 2011), to count Cassandra in the ranks of liminal bilinguals (Mairs 2011; James 2024).

Maggie Tighie (Oxford): *A Delicate Harmony: Auletic Mimesis in Euripides' Phaethon*

Euripides' *Phaethon*, produced approximately between 420 and 415 BCE, survives only in fragments, yet it preserves the *parodos* in its entirety, a passage often described as a "Dawn song." Throughout this opening performance, the chorus constructs a vivid soundscape of early morning, evoking both the sounds of nature and the activities of local labourers. In doing so, the chorus situates Phaethon's anticipated fall within a rich environmental context.

The *aulos*, the principal instrument of Greek tragedy, was renowned in classical Athens for its mimetic capabilities, and its role would have been central in realising the vivid auditory imagery of the *parodos*. Additionally, the innovative compositional style labelled as 'New Music' had become increasingly prevalent in Euripides' work. There is an innate relationship between the development of 'New Music' and the *aulos*, the instrument previously being named the movement's 'unsung hero' as it showcased both the technical advancements of the instrument and the growing skill of its performers. By exploiting the instrument's capacity for aural imitation, Euripides may have channelled the stylistic innovations of New Music into a programmatic form that enhanced the audience's experience.

Through choral mimesis, the *parodos* of *Phaethon* traces a descent from the heavens to the sea, mirroring the arc of Phaethon's fall. During the *parodos*, the performed music of the *aulos* may have been required to jump from one described sound to another, from the nightingale to the syrinx and the swan, a rapid and changing mimesis. This paper explores how the *aulos* may have been employed in this song, arguing that its mimetic resources would have heightened the audience's sensory experience, intending to illuminate Euripides' innovative engagement within an increasingly experimental musical culture.

Fotini Gkotzampasopoulou (Athens): *Incest in tragedy: fragmentary Thyestes and Aeolus, a sociological interpretation* (lightning talk)

The present talk examines the theme of incest in the myths of Thyestes and Aeolus in the homonymous tragedies by Sophocles (*TrGF 4* 247-269) and Euripides (*TrGF 5.1* 13a-41), attempts their partial reconstruction and considers their social interpretation.

In ancient Greek moral consciousness, the practice of 'close' incest was firmly rejected and perceived as a source of pollution (*μίασμα*), even in the absence of explicit legal sanctions (see Pl. *Resp*. 5.461, 9.571c-d). Both Thyestes and Macareus commit incest consciously and violently, an act which leads to the exposure of the infants and the suicide of Pelopia and Canace, as a consequence of shame and dishonor. Here, incest is identified with both hubris (*ὕβρις*) and hamartia (*ἁμαρτία*) because of awareness and violence, unlike the case of Oedipus or Telephus (Soph. *Mysians TrGF 4* 409-418) who committed (or came close to) incest in ignorance. The literary and moral framing of these myths thus reveals incest as a serious crime, at both the ethical and socio-political levels (see Pl. *Leg.* 8.838a-c, Arist. *Poet*. 13.1453a).

Why, then, does Athenian theater stage one of the most taboo subjects in collective consciousness? The socio-political background serves as a substratum of Attic tragedy. Indeed, the moral climate of the late 5th cent. BC, often described in

terms of decline in relation to incest (cf. Xen. *Mem.* 4.4.19–22; Lys. 14.28–29, 41). Thus, the aim of this talk is to investigate whether tragedians actually criticize the social ills, and whether this occurs in the taboo of incest.

Cecil Barlow (University of North Carolina at Greensboro): *Signs of Struggle: The Intersection of Fate and Womanhood in Athenian Tragedy*

In my lightning talk, I will discuss my research on women in Greek Tragedy. My research focuses on the interaction between women and fate in Athenian tragedy. I propose that female characters in tragedy are aware of the structure of fate in their stories, and the actions they take function to avert what they perceive their own fate to be—something that threatens their mortality. I argue that the fate of these characters is entirely dependent on their womanhood and positionality within ancient Athenian society. My current research centers on Clytemnestra, with Clytemnestra knowing her place within the home—and thus her mortality due to the nature of ancient Greek society--is endangered by Agamemnon's return. The discussion as well will focus on the specific factors of Clytemnestra's life: her age, her status as a mother, and her personal fears—that cause her to take the actions she does in the story. Finally, I wish to discuss more female characters and their places within this theory, as I argue that this theory applies to Athenian tragedy as a whole. My talk will fit into the conference's themes of ancient Literature and Queer theory in classics.

PANEL 69: Political Philosophy 3. Chair: Jenny Bryan (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Giorgi Barnabishvili (Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University): *Some Aspects of Conceptualisation of Ethnic Identity in Xenophon's Cyropaedia*

Xenophon reconfigures the Greek conception of collective identity—*ethnos*—traditionally anchored in *paideia* and in identity markers such as language, religion, customs, and blood. For him, ethnic identity is best understood as a category constituted primarily through education and upbringing—that is, through the enactment and preservation of the behavioural norms inculcated by *paideia*.

Xenophon, by using the Persians as a case study, shows how the educational system can be developed, namely, it presents development, implementation in lived practice and ultimately, its degeneration under the Achaemenids. He explicitly links this institutional arc to a qualitative transformation of the Persian *ethnos.* In *Cyropaedia* 1.2, Persian civic education functions as the scaffold of ethnic identity, underwriting standards of mores and coordinating conduct.

In 8.1–8.2, Xenophon shows how Cyrus transposed the habits of civic education into the framework of imperial governance. He deploys a form of soft power: encouraging and rewarding subjects, displaying religious tolerance, and organising popular festivals that are desirable for the people. These practices, in turn, affect the unification of the empire's diverse populations, consolidating them into a single political entity.

To highlight how distinctive Xenophon's understanding of *ethnos* is, this study considers the views of three of his contemporaries on ethnicity. For Herodotus, " being Greek" rests on language, religion, customs, and blood. For Isocrates, by contrast, Greek civilisation no longer depends on blood, but rather on education and intellect. For Thucydides, the defining marker of Athenian identity is culture and upbringing, with *paideusis* understood as integral to culture. In conclusion, Xenophon

presents Persian identity as a synthesis of education/upbringing and specific institutional markers.

The conclusion of the paper will suggest useful insights concerning the conception of an ethnic identity in antiquity. Thus, in this viewpoint, it fits one of the main discourses of the conference- ancient political philosophy.

Christopher Farrell (University College, Dublin): *A First Critical Translation of Britain's Earliest Written History*

The proposed paper aligns with the theme of Ancient Political Philosophy; it re-examines the Conspiracy of Cinadon at Sparta with consideration for Xenophon's broader concern for paideia and training young men. Previous examinations of the conspiracy tend to focus on Xenophon's observations that bookend the affair, starting with his declaration that Cinadon 'was not one of the *homoioi*' (*Hellenica* 3.3.5) and concluding with Cinadon's declaration that he wished 'to be inferior to no one in Lacedaemon' (*mēdenòs hḗttōn eĩnai en Lakedaímoni* 3.3.11). Both have been taken to suggest that Cinadon ought to be classed among the Spartan 'inferiors' (*hypomeiones*), an assumption followed by speculation that Cinadon might have lost his status as a Spartiate due to poverty and an inability to contribute to the syssitia.

In revisiting the narrative, however, this paper examines Xenophon's emphasis on Cinadon's political status with respect to his age. Before commenting that Cinadon was not one of the *homoioi* Xenophon identifies him as a 'youth' (*neanískos* 3.3.5). This label is reiterated when Xenophon notes that the ephors sent Cinadon 'to Aulon with the other younger men' (*tōn neōtérōn* 3.3.8) in their attempt to reveal the conspiracy. Xenophon presents Cinadon as an angry young man seeking to usher in societal change through violence. In so doing he calls to mind a *topos* familiar to his ancient audience from countless Greek myths, as well as recent political history. By analysing Cinadon with consideration for: Xenophon's use of age terms across his corpus, his claims about the status of men under the age of thirty in the Constitution of the Spartans, and reflections on the role that 'youths' reportedly played in the political violence at Athens in 411 and 404 (Thucydides 8.69, 92; Xenophon *Hellenica* 2.3.23), this paper proposes a new reading of the Cinadonian Conspiracy.

Jaroslav Daneš (University of Hradec Králové, Czechia): *Aeschylus and Euripides on Stasis*

A properly functioning society amounts to a delicate balance of conflict and cooperation, dissent and consensus. Conflict appears to be a fundamental characteristic of politics since various agents have diverse and different interests and there are many cleavages in a society. It seems, then, that one of the most fundamental political problems may be formulated as how to manage or to handle a political conflict to make it fruitful instead of letting it be corrosive. The archaic and classical Greek literature was haunted by the spectre of *stasis* and the categories of internal upheaval and internal war seem to be the focus of classical political theory, which mirrors the bitter experiences of ancient Greek writers and the prevalence of the phenomenon. Since the scrutinies of *stasis* were usually conducted by historians, who preferred empirical data and sources which were factual (Hdt., Thuc., Xen., Diod. Sic., *Hell. Oxy*.) rather than a product of literary/dramatic fiction and imagination, a specialised book on *stasis* and Greek tragedy is still lacking, although here and there we find some references to dramatists and their plays. In my paper I will present the conclusions from the draft of my book *Aeschylus and Euripides on Stasis*. I ask a few fundamental questions: first, how *stasis* was represented and reflected on in the plays

of Aeschylus and Euripides; second, whether there are some passages about the causes and prevalence of *stasis* and explanations of these, and, if so, how they correspond with various approaches of scholars to *stasis* (e.g. Legon 1966, Mustacchio 1972, Ruschenbush 1978, Ste Croix 1981, Lintott 1982, Fuks 1984, Gehrke 1985, Fisher 2004), and third, and finally, whether the representation of *stasis* changes over time (472–405 BC).

PANEL 70: New Testament to Late Antiquity. Chair: *tbc; venue: #tbc

Leo Boonstra (Cambridge): *Psêlaphaô and the uncertainty of New Testament touch*

In a striking redeployment of historiographical tropes, the first Epistle of John opens with reference to "that […] which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and handled with our hands". While the claim to autopsy and hearsay as sources of authority is commonplace, the reference to touch is not. Touching becomes a crucial stake in the text later collected into the New Testament, both as the medium of Jesus' healing miracles, and as the physical verification of his corporeality, not least after his resurrection. However, what is particularly striking about the touches in the New Testament (and related texts, such as 1 Clement) is that the verb for touching is frequently *psêlaphaô* (ψηλαφάω), a word which has associations especially of uncertainty, of feeling in the dark. This paper will examine the New Testament touches in the context of Greco-Roman literature, and in particular the uncertainty of touch implied in the use of *psêlaphaô*. It will argue that the New Testament texts develop a particular language of touching, where touch becomes a means of verification, but constantly marred by a sense of uncertain reaching. The divine is thus referred to an uncertain zone between touching and not touching.

Lenka Skoupa (Charles University in Prague/ Cambridge): *Inheritance law of individuals with disabilities in the legal sources of the 6 th c. AD*

This paper will look at the societal expectations faced by individuals relating to their ownership of material wealth around the period of their death during the Justinianic era. The aim of this paper is to provide an idea of the legal regulation of the social life related to inheritance law at this specific moment in time and in the exact social setting that was relevant in relation to a specific group of individuals.

Thanks to the extant nature of the Corpus Iuris Civilis, the legal compilation promulgated by emperor Justinian, we are provided with a snapshot of the societal rules governing the law of this time. This gives us a unique opportunity to study a system of norms applied by the Roman society of this era.

Looking at a selection of these laws which provide for modification to the active, passive and procedural rights of an individual relating to their wealth and its disposal in the event of their death, it is possible to spot a specific type of a group of modifications. The common denominator for these modifications is their relationship to what we would now term disability.

This paper will map out the types of disabilities that seem to have been of special concern to the Romans when it came to inheritance law. Futhermore, special modes of inheritance rules concerning the creation of wills will be discussed in the context of the specific health concern to which they relate to and in the context of this time period. This allows us to do two things in particular: firstly, to recognise the importance assigned by the Romans to different health statuses, and, secondly, to

consider the impact on the society of these rules. After all, legal regulation both forms and reflects upon the society which formed them.

As such, this shall be an exercise in recognition of the potential impact of both disability studies and legal history on study of Classics. Both areas provide us with rich sources for the study of this period and should be utilised more both in and outside of the classroom.

Alexis Balmont (The Chinese University of Hong Kong): *Christian Texts in Tang China: Syriac Christianity's Eastern Expansion in Late Antiquity (635-750)*

This paper examines newly translated Chinese Christian texts from the Tang dynasty (618-907) as crucial evidence for understanding the easternmost expansion of Syriac Christianity during late antiquity. Drawing on recent philological and theological analysis of seven Chinese Christian texts dated between the 7th and 8th centuries—including the famous Xi'an stele (781), manuscripts from Dunhuang, and the Luoyang pillar (815)—this study reveals how Syriac Christian communities established themselves in China from 635 onwards, precisely within the late antique period.

The research demonstrates that these texts, rather than being direct translations of known Syriac or Persian sources, represent original compositions that showcase a sophisticated process of religious inculturation. The Chinese Christian authors employed Buddhist and Daoist vocabulary to express Christian theological concepts, creating a unique form of Christianity adapted to the Chinese cultural context. This adaptation strategy mirrors similar processes observed in other peripheries of the late antique Christian world.

The paper particularly focuses on the role of Persian, Sogdian, and Bactrian migrants who fled westward following the Arab conquests of Persia (637-651), establishing Christian communities along the Silk Road trade routes. Imperial recognition in 635, documented through the Tang court's edict permitting Christian practice, provides a precise chronological anchor for studying how late antique Christianity negotiated with non-Roman imperial powers.

These sources offer invaluable insights into late antique Christianity's geographic reach, demonstrating that the period's religious transformations extended far beyond the Mediterranean world into East Asia, challenging traditional boundaries of late antique studies.

PANEL 71 (Workshop): Critical Fabulation Workshop. Organiser and Chair: Nandini Pandey (John Hopkins); venue: #tbc

Overview: This two-hour workshop, led by a panel of scholars from various classical subdisciplines, convenes conference participants at all career stages to share and discuss methodological tools for addressing our fields' marginalization of subaltern voices. We will focus on the potentials and pitfalls of "critical fabulation" (Hartman) as one strategy for epistemic repair in our research, writing, and teaching about the ancient Mediterranean world. During the first 45 minutes, panelists will each deliver 5-minute "lightning talks" including challenges and provocations specific to their diverse areas of expertise. For the next half hour, we will each lead smaller breakout groups in applying "critical fabulation" and allied methods to short examples we provide (no prior preparation required). During the final 45 minutes, we'll reconvene to discuss the risks and rewards, ethics and implementation of the methods we've discussed, plus share tips, ideas, teaching tools, sample assignments, and best practices. Our goals are to generate constructive conversation and expand our shared toolkits as we work toward a more just, humane, and inclusive discipline that

continues to honor ancient evidence, cultivate critical rigor, and advance future scholars.

Context: Classics in 2025 faces a moral imperative to confront and redress its entanglements with white, male, Western supremacy. Many of us feel moved to action by disciplinary critiques advanced over the past decade by early-career, minoritized scholars, referenced below. Yet no consensus emerges about that action. Some call for the abolition of classics altogether. Others hope to reformulate and renovate our practices. Many are examining classics' relations with slavery, race, misogyny, and colonialism, or advancing more global, comparative approaches to Mediterranean antiquity. Some are using epigraphy, archaeology, critical race theory, transhistorical analyses, and autoethnography to critique the biases of our philological record. This panel engages anyone experimenting with these and allied methods in collaborative problem-solving when it comes to dismantling barriers to the study of antiquity; striving for pedagogical and bibliographic justice; innovating more inclusive critical approaches; and supporting early-career scholars on the front lines of this disciplinary revolution.

Questions: Inspired by recent calls for action, yet aware of limitations in our individual disciplinary training, the panelists hope (as co-learners rather than experts) to generate discussion of the following questions:

● What are the strengths and limitations of our various disciplinary archive(s)? How do we address biases/exclusions/silences while making good use of our existing resources and meeting the needs of diverse students and programs?

● How do we use ethical, evidence-based methods to redress our sources' silencing of subaltern voices (e.g., enslaved people, immigrants, foreigners, women, queer people, children, the elderly, the physiologically or neurologically diverse) without coopting them?

● What can philologists learn from historians, archaeologists, art historians, epigraphers, papyrologists, etc. in recuperating marginalized perspectives, and vice versa? What practical considerations, examples, and classroom activities might best guide our efforts?

● How can we productively and respectfully apply strategies innovated by Black feminist thinkers and creative writers in our teaching at all levels – from primary school education to postgraduate supervision?

● What cultural and archival differences affect our application of methods like "critical fabulation," which addresses the Atlantic slave trade, to the study of Mediterranean antiquity? How do we accommodate our own positionality and that of our students?

● How can we engage diverse learners, publics, and funding bodies in our efforts toward epistemic justice amidst increasing economic and political pressures? What differential risks do contingent/marginalized scholars face and how can more senior scholars support them?

Nandini Pandey (John Hopkins) *Redressing Epistemic Injustice in Classics*

Pandey will briefly introduce the workshop goals and the panelists, who will then each

deliver brief "lightning talks" on their own hopes, methods, experiences, and challenges in employing critical fabulation in their research and teaching. Pandey will conclude the lightning round with brief thoughts on "epistemic justice" as it applies to classics, drawing on Miranda Fricker, Saidiya Hartman, Kristie Dotson and José Medina among others. Pandey's breakout session will explore the role of personal

experience and autoethnography in addressing epistemic gaps within Latin literature. Pandey will also moderate the panel's last hour of general conversation/Q&A with participants. Goals throughout will include honoring ancient source material, in various media, and supporting young, minoritized, or otherwise vulnerable scholars in work not often rewarded by traditional supervision, hiring, publication, and promotion.

Sarah Cullinan Herring (Kansas) *Teaching Greek Poetry in Higher Education: Lost Voices and Queer Experiences*

Cullinan Herring's lightning talk discusses her use of critical fabulation as a pedagogical strategy in Greek literature courses in the UK and US. In this talk and her breakout session leadership, she shares concrete assignment ideas for various classroom settings; explores the method's efficacy in increasing student engagement and comprehension; and discusses its demonstrated impact on student experience. She also asks how methods like critical fabulation offer practical means of showcasing what the study of humanities offers both individuals and institutions, equipping participants to defend humanistic study at a time of budget cuts and political polarization.

Virginia Mastellari (University of Pavia): *Critical Fabulation and Gendered Violence in the New Comedy of Greece and Rome*

Mastellari's lightning talk rethinks the gendered violence at the heart of Greek New Comedy (and Roman adaptations thereof) through the lens of critical fabulation. In Menander's plays, women's abuse often initiates the plot and is ultimately "resolved" through marriage: to give but two examples, in *Epitrepontes*, Pamphile's rape is revealed only to be absorbed into a comic reconciliation, while in *Perikeiromene*, Glykera's public humiliation—her hair violently cut off by a jealous soldier—becomes the obstacle to be overcome on the way to reunion. While these women do speak, their voices are tightly constrained: they are never permitted to narrate or interpret the violence that structures their stories, and their words are directed toward reconciliation rather than testimony. Using the techniques of critical fabulation, Mastellari models ways of expanding space for these characters' perspectives via fabulated monologues and narrative interventions. She demonstrates critical fabulation's value as a strategy for modern staging: by disrupting comic "happy endings" and inserting speculative voices, directors can reframe New Comedy in ways that remain theatrically powerful while ethically resonant for contemporary audiences.

Gaia Gianni (Ohio State University) *Epigraphy and Critical Fabulation*

The fragmentary and biased nature of ancient archives – which overwhelmingly reflect the perspectives of elite male slaveholders – significantly limits our understanding of the enslaved, whose voices were largely unrecorded and purposefully silenced. Even tombstones for enslaved people do not necessarily reflect the will and agency of the honorand(s). Indeed, many enslaved individuals were buried by their enslavers or with their enslavers' approval. Thus, while funerary epitaphs might contain information about the deceased, they often still embody the viewpoint of the dominus/a.

Critical fabulation confronts this methodological challenge by proposing to mimic the violence represented in the archive while simultaneously attempting to redress it, portraying enslaved individuals not as fungible commodities but as

historical subjects capable of agency, joy, and resistance. Demonstrating this method via epigraphical case study, Gianni's lightning talk humanizes individuals like Rhanis (*CIL* 14.2737), a sixteen-year-old enslaved woman who died in childbirth, or the aging wet-nurse Sabina (*CIL*6.16450), both of whom were buried by their enslavers. Specifically, her lightning talk imaginatively reconstructs how these women were likely victims of physical and psychological violence but also enjoyed possible moments of reprieve, self-care, and small acts of resistance.

In her breakout session and contributions to the general conversation, Gianni will focus on authorial bias and how scholars can misuse critical fabulation by: a) creating overly "optimistic" or "rosy" narratives which do not reflect the historical record; b) identifying with the historical subject and thus switching the attention from the historical actor to the researcher; and c) presenting a single interpretative scenario. She proposes ways of steering clear of such pitfalls while inviting the audience to engage in the discussion and creation of narratives.

Lewis Webb (Gothenburg) *Vox precantum: Female Prayer and the Archive*

Webb's lightning talk explores how critical fabulation and a corpus of female prayers in Roman drama (Plautus, Terence) might help us better understand the religious lives of women often missing from the archive, particularly elderly, pregnant, working, and enslaved women. Roman drama had diverse audiences of varying genders, professions, and statuses and encompassed diverse themes and voices (Plaut. Poen. 5-35; Ter. Hec. 28-48). The playwrights and actors themselves were from lower social strata or enslaved. Consequently, the corpus of female prayers offers invaluable insights into subaltern conceptions of gendered religious activity. Of note are the similarities between male and female prayer formulae, the variability in deities invoked, the predominance of *obsecro* as a verb of petition, and the patterns of gendered and non-gendered content. Webb argues that critical fabulation enables us to enflesh the religious experiences of dramatic personae, to move beyond the stage, and to imagine how diverse women in the audience reacted to the *imago vitae cotidianae* before them (Cic. *Rosc. Am*. 47). Ultimately, he demonstrates that critical fabulation challenges us to ask different questions about human-divine communication, religious knowledge, and the nature of Roman belief.

Christopher Londa (Philipps-Universität Marburg) *Object Lessons: Slavery and the Giessen Cicero Papyrus*

Londa's lightning talk excavates the layers of labor exploitation archived in a single papyrus and asks what stories critical fabulation might enable us to tell about the actors in its life history beyond the "scenes of subjection" recorded in its fibers. Held and catalogued in the papyrological collection of the Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen, P. Iand. 90 is one of the earliest of the small number of Latin literary papyri surviving from Roman Egypt. It contains on its recto a first-century CE fragment of Cicero's *Verrine Orations* (2.2.3–4), whose text describes how Scipio Africanus adorned Sicilian cities with the spoils of Carthago deleta. On its verso the papyrus preserves the names of four enslaved individuals numbered in an inventory otherwise bereft of detail. Their presence, under the literal surface of Cicero's text, makes suddenly and starkly visible the chain of unfree lives tethering Latin literature to the institution of slavery. From the bare imprint of their four names emerge the ghosts of countless others sharing some part of their condition—those enslaved and trafficked through Carthage, Sicily, and Egypt; those made to carry and convey the plunder of war; those conscripted into the mechanics of Ciceronian oratory and documentary

labor; those compelled to copy, mark, and read texts aloud; and those whose lives were tallied and quantified on the backs of literary scraps. No single biography will compass the enormity of human suffering that authored this object. Yet by tracing the labor of its making, we sound out the depth of the chasms in the archive and explore what it takes to bridge the void toward storytelling "otherhow."

Greta Gualdi (Columbia University) *Progymnasmata as an early framework for critical fabulation*

Gualdi's lightning talk shows how *progymnasmata*, the progressive rhetorical exercises commonly practiced in Greco-Roman schools, can be reactivated as a framework for critical fabulation. These exercises already fostered speculative and imaginative habits, focusing on select characters and narrative moments as products of their own time. In Gualdi's view, Libanius' *progymnasmata* also display interest in marginalized voices. They scaffold a model of reparative storytelling that gives voice to absent yet plausible figures in the ancient world while confronting long-standing silences embedded in our cultural memory. Opening further space for socially responsive readings, Gualdi's breakout session brainstorms applications of this technique to classical epic in order to counterbalance dominant narratives with space for other voices and stories.

PANEL 72: Alexander: Still dead, but doing just fine, thanks. Co-Organiser and Chair: Isabel Hood (Independent Scholar); Co-Organiser: Benedetta Muccioli (Albert Ludwigs Universitat)

Benedetta Muccioli (Albert Ludwigs Universitat*): P.Herc. 1017: the fragment of Alexander*

This study focuses on P.Herc. 1017, a significant papyrus from Ercolano that contains fragmentary references to Alexander the Great and related historical figures. The main objective is to analyze this papyrus fragment to better understand the historical memory and cultural representation of Alexander in the Hellenistic period. Notably, the text refers to the magnanimous treatment given to the women of Darius, reflecting ethical and moral considerations embedded within the narrative of Alexander's campaigns and their aftermath. Such reflections provide insight into how ancient authors shaped Alexander's image not only as a conqueror but also as a benevolent and just ruler.

Methodologically, the research adopts a philological and historical approach. It involves transcription of the damaged text, paleographic analysis, and careful interpretation based on previous scholarship, most notably the early 20th-century studies by Domenico Bassi. Due to the fragmentary and partly charred condition of the papyrus, modern techniques in textual reconstruction and comparative literary analysis are applied to contextualize the manuscript within the broader corpus of Ercolanesi papyri and Hellenistic historiography. Attention is given to the linguistic style, thematic content, and intertextual parallels with other Alexander-related sources.

The findings suggest that P.Herc. 1017 is one of the rare non-philosophical papyri from Ercolano providing direct historical insight into the mythologization and ethical framing of Alexander the Great's life and legacy. This papyrus offers valuable evidence bridging literary tradition and historical reality. Furthermore, it highlights how Alexander's image was shaped not only through oral tradition and later literary

works but also via documentary transmission preserved in papyri, thus contributing to an enhanced understanding of ancient historiography and cultural memory.

Isabel Hood (Independent Scholar): *Alexander of Macedon on Coptic Textiles*

Two identical tunic roundels name Alexander of Macedon in Coptic. In a rich highly detailed mirror image scene below, Alexander is depicted on horseback, being crowned.

Coptic tunic roundels naming an individual in Coptic usually show assorted scenes or a scene that are key recognisable episodes within a cycle from that person's life. Biblical personages predominate (e.g. the life of Joseph the Carpenter, or Daniel), with scenes relating to Greek mythology also being popular. Inscribed names can also attest to owners, or makers, at times. But an inscription in Coptic on textiles is rare and they don't name or show historical individuals. These roundels are therefore highly unusual.

1. Tunic decoration showing Alexander. 11.18. The George Washington University Museum and The Textile Museum. Public Domain.
2. Alexander the Great on horseback. 1959.123. The Cleveland Museum of Art. Public Domain.

The ancient provenance of both roundels is unknown, but they are thought to come from Egypt (with Syria sometimes suggested). Fragments of Coptic tunics come from funerary contexts, which preserved them, a marker of the value placed on them by the deceased owner/s. Whether kept for 'good' for death, or also worn in life, they obviously had personal significance. Both roundels on art-historical grounds get dated to the 7th century CE. Whether these were removed from the same, or different, tunics is unknown. But they celebrate the same man, hundreds of years after his death.

The Alexander roundels draw on a number of common Coptic motifs. The design is however more similar to Coptic ivories without inscription interpreted as victorious Emperors on horseback.

This paper discusses the roundels, comparator pieces, and asks why Alexander of Macedon, specifically, has been named in commemoration.

Guendalina Daniela Maria Taietti (Liverpool and Barcelona): *Karaghiozis' Alexander: between history and folklore*

Alexander the Great was a promoter of his own myth-making, and Greeks have continuously engaged with his persona and deeds since antiquity. In Modern Greek reception, Alexander is present in the whole span of human activities, such as gadgets and souvenirs, songs, mottoes, folktales, romances, poetry, paintings and movies. One could say that, instead of commemorating a dead king, Greeks are keeping Alexander alive. Curiously, only sixteen Greek theatrical plays on the Macedonian are attested. 1 Among them, seven are based on historical events that took place during Alexander's reign, and nine present a folk-legendary account of Alexander's deeds; six of the sixteen plays target children as an audience. The Karaghiozis shadow-theatre play Alexander the Great and the cursed snake/dragon (Ο Μέγας Αλέξανδρος και ο καταραμένος όφις/δράκος) is the only one repeatedly put on stage throughout Greece since the first half of the twentieth century, and no other theatrical play seem to have ever become so popular. This paper seeks to explore the multi-layered reception of Alexander III of Macedon in the Karaghiozis shadow-theatre and to discuss its educational-political relevance. It will thus explore the main themes—ancient and modern—of the two Karaghiozis shadow-theatre plays Alexander the Great and the cursed snake/dragon and Alexander the great and the riddles of the Vizier's daughter (Ο Μέγας Αλέξανδρος και τα αινίγματα της Βεζυροπούλας), and offer an explanation to the success of the cursed snake/dragon play over the riddles of the Vizier's daughter (and any other theatrical play about Alexander).

PANEL 73: Women and Girls' Experience in Greek Religion 1. Organizers and Chairs: Ellie Mackin Roberts (Leeds) and Ben Cassell (London); venue: #tbc

For Part 2 see below, Panel 81.

This panel will present nine papers and concluding roundtable of 15 minutes each that examine the embodied religious experiences of girls and women across diverse ancient Greek cult contexts. Each paper investigates a different cult tradition while employing distinct but complimentary theoretical frameworks drawn from sensory archaeology, cognitive science of religion, psychology, phenomenological approaches, and gender studies. Together, these contributions illuminate how gendered bodies moved though, transformed, and were transformed by the sacred environments they encountered across the Mediterranean world.

The individual papers interrogate different combinations of embodied experiences, sensory engagement, spatial analysis, and gendered religiosity to address specific cult contexts while contributing to broader theoretical conversations. Papers may emphasise haptic and kinaesthetic dimensions of ritual participation, foreground the acoustic and visual properties of sacred landscapes, or investigate the material culture of votive practice or the spatial choreography of processional movement. This methodological diversity demonstrates how sacred spaces functioned as transitional environments where boundaries between human and divine, childhood and adulthood, domestic and public spheres became permeable through ritual practice. Likewise, by positioning a consideration of experiential affect at the heart of these case studies, issues of female agency within the religious life of their community will similarly be analysed. The geographical scope encompasses sanctuary sites across the Greek world, from Attica to Asia Minor and Magna Graecia, investigating cult practices dedicated to major and minor deities alike. Case studies might range from initiation rituals at coastal sanctuaries to sensory manipulation in mystery religions, from the

material culture of textile dedication to the spatial organisation of urban festival processions, and from the acoustic landscapes of cave sanctuaries to the embodied choreographies of ecstatic ritual.

Drawing upon the full spectrum of ancient evidence – archaeological and bio-archaeological remains, votive dedications, literary testimonia, epigraphic records, iconographic programmes, and spatial analysis of sanctuary layouts – the panel demonstrates how female religious experience was fundamentally shaped by multisensory engagement with sacred landscapes. This theoretically pluralistic approach reveals how girls and women negotiated complex religious identities though embodied practice rather than abstract theological belief. The panel argues that gendered religiosity in ancient Greece emerged not from fixed categories of 'male' and 'female' religious roles, but from the dynamic interplay between human bodies, material environments, and divine presence as experienced through multisensory, and cognitive, engagement with sacred space.

Ellie Mackin Roberts (Leeds): *Sensing Female Religious Experience (guided meditation of 10 min)*

The assemblage of sensorial experiences generated by ritual practice are fundamental it its transformative and generative potential. In this guided meditation the sensorial potentialities afforded by several of the rites and spatial contexts discussed throughout the panel, will be described in relation to how and in what ways they could impact the body and minds of their participants.

Margarita Sardak (University of Cologne): *Sacrificial calendar or cooking calendar? The role of Athenian women in the preparation of ritual food.*

The ancient Greeks were convinced that certain rituals and cults could only be practised by women. Mostly, they considered fertility – the main mission of an ancient woman. However, even in common rituals, girls and women were often responsible for tasks that mirrored their everyday activities, such as spinning and weaving. The lived religion gave women the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills they needed at various stages of lives and to demonstrate what they had already learnt.

This paper focuses on an aspect of the embodied religious experiences of girls and women that has received insufficient consideration to date: their participation in preparing ritual food. Women were usually excluded from the performance of the animal sacrifice – the central element of most religious festivals – and from the subsequent preparation of the meat. However, visual, epigraphic and literary sources document a wealth of specific breads, cakes, porridges that were prepared for certain festivals and offered to the respective deity in a particular manner.

The involvement of women in the daily preparation of meals in an ancient Greek household remains difficult to ascertain and varied depending on the era and the social status of the family in question. But beyond any doubt is the role of the lady of the house as guardian and manager of the home and family resources, which is well documented for all periods from Homer to Late Antiquity. Regardless of whether the cooking was personally carried out or 'only' organised and supervised, the 'Attic religious cooking calendar' was an oeuvre of women, an important expression of female agency within the religious life of the polis. This paper analyses its role in structuring time, erasing borders between domestic and public spheres, imparting knowledge and techniques, constructing gender, creating identities and internalising religion in a specific, multisensory way.

Sarah A. Eisen (Northwestern University): *Is sacrifice a misogynistic ritual? A new perspective from sensory studies*

Animal sacrifice was an omnipresent and paramount ritual for the ancient Greek polis: almost no scholar would disagree. However, the opinions concerning the gender politics of this ritual are not so aligned. Were women excluded and denied a share of the sacrificial meat, as Marcel Detienne has argued? Or were they integrated into every step of the ritual, acting as key agents in *pompē* and prayer? After providing a brief overview of scholarship regarding the role of women in ancient Greek animal sacrifice, this paper will provide a targeted examination of their role in the ritual's sensory production, which allows for new evidence to be introduced to the debate. Specifically, this paper focuses on the sacrificial incense that characterized nearly all offerings, a vital sensory accoutrement that was laden with theological implications: Arabian frankincense metonymically represented the god's presence while simultaneously acting as a theurgic beacon at the altar. Incense and *thymiateria* are frequently associated with women in literature as well as the visual and epigraphic record. By focusing on how this olfactory apparatus was funded, processed, and deployed, this paper challenges how we define inclusion during *thysia*, and argues scholars must shift their focus from the physical act of animal slaughter to a more holistic understanding of sacrifice. This sensory lens similarly pushes scholars beyond a superficial binary of gender roles (e.g., libation = women) to an embodied framework that more accurately represents the sacrificial variations that occurred in distinct sacred settings.

Karolina Frank (University of Warsaw): *Sensing Female Religious Experience (guided meditation of 10 min)*

What can be discerned about women's religiosity and ritual participation in the more peripheral regions of ancient Greece? Beyond the better-documented contexts of major poleis such as Athens, the evidence for women's religious lives is often fragmentary and elusive. The roles they occupied and the practices in which they engaged, particularly in the case of non-elite women, tend to emerge only in partial glimpses. Yet, by carefully assembling and contextualising these scattered pieces of information, it becomes possible to reconstruct a more nuanced picture of how women interacted
with the sacred sphere. This paper seeks to contribute to that endeavour by examining localised religious practices as reflected in the oracular consultations inscribed on lead tablets from Dodona in Epirus. This paper is structured around three case studies. The first examines two tablets (DVC 70A, DVC 1515B) in which the women Oreandra and Sibylla are designated to serve an unnamed goddess, with particular attention to the ways in which their newly assumed religious functions were articulated and to the role of the oracle in conferring such authority. The second case study focuses on the "seer" Timothea (DVC 1082A), examining both the circumstances and motivations underlying her consultation. Finally, this paper addresses the enigmatic figure of Paiania/Paionia (DVC 3174, DVC 2549A), who is described in the tablets as effecting cures through the laying on of hands, a practice that invites reflection on its possible religious or magical dimensions. Taken together, these enquiries aim not only to illuminate otherwise obscure forms of women's religious participation in northwestern Greece, but also to explore how oracular consultations involving women—whether initiated by them or concerning them—compare and contrast with analogous questions pertaining to male religious activity.

Susan Deacy (London and Bristol): *Women, Girls, and Embodied Participation in Athenian Religion in the Against Neaira*

This paper will explore how the *Against Neaira* ([Dem]. 59) sheds light on the embodied and gendered experience of women and girls in Athenian religious life. Focusing on the speech's references to female participation in the Eleusinian Mysteries and the Great Panathenaia, it will examine how non-citizen, enslaved, marginalised women moved through sacred spaces, participated in ritual events, and were seen and interpreted by others. It will explore how the speech reveals significant details about the permeability of ritual boundaries: between public and private, sacred and profane, and citizen and non-citizen. It will discuss how the movement of Neaira and Metaneira from Corinth to Athens for major festivals suggests that, far from a closed system, Athenian religious life could be accessed, inhabited, and negotiated by a range of female bodies. As will be explored, the accounts of the young women's lodging arrangements, visibility at sympotic gatherings, and proximity to ritual action reflect complex intersections of gender, age, class, and status. By re-reading *Against Neaira* through the lens of spatial and sensory experience, the paper will contribute to broader conversations about female agency in Athenian religion. It will demonstrate how even (or *especially*) within hostile narratives, it is possible to trace how ritual practice shaped, and was shaped by, the embodied presence of women and girls whose lives operated at the frontiers of, or beyond, normative citizen identities. It will contend that these marginalised people offer important perspectives on how gendered religiosity might be materially and socially enacted in ancient Athens.

Naomi Allman (Leicester): *Hermaphroditos: A Forgotten God of Marriage*

A link between the intersex deity Hermaphroditos and the concept of marriage is known from literary (Theoph. *Char*. 16,11), epigraphic (the Salmakis Inscription), and architectural evidence (the Salmakis complex). For example, the Salmakis Inscription describes Hermaphroditos as ὃς γάμον εὗρεν. However, Hermaphroditos is usually considered in relation to the effeminising of men (Mart. Epigr. 14.174, 10.4.506, 6.68.7-10; Ov. Met. 4.274-388). This paper seeks to argue that the Salmakis complex, with the fountain of Salmakis central to the architecture, represent this complex, and Hermaphroditos, had an important role in pre-nuptial rituals for brides in Hellenistic, and Roman, Halikarnassos. The later Roman expansion and monumentalisation of the Salmakis complex seem to represent the status of this area within local wedding traditions, as this paper will argue. Central to this is the female religious experience. This paper will explore not only the potential use of the fountain in pre-nuptial purificatory baths, but the sensory experience from the fountain being within a cave. It is also theorised, as this paper will explore, that the more denigratory story of Hermaphroditos introduced by Ovid in 8 CE relates to more violent Roman perspectives of marriage (cf. the rape of the Sabines). To conclude, this paper will argue that the female experience in the worship of Hermaphroditos has been long overlooked.

SUNDAY 12 APRIL MARCH - SESSION 10: 14.30-16.30

PANEL 74: Second Sophistic. Chair: *tbc venue: #tbc

Claire Saint-Armour (Cambridge): *Undead Rhetoric: Death, Dismemberment, and the Rhetorical Body in Polemo of Laodicea*

Discourses of Greek rhetorical theory and education are full of bodies. Handbooks, school exercises, and theoretical texts imagine both individual works and larger corpora in bodily terms: as collections of parts which add up, more or less harmoniously, into ordered wholes. This bodily imagery plays a normative, as well as a descriptive, role. Critics might diagnose a composition or a corpus as diseased, disordered, disabled, or dead. Oratorical theory and pedagogy present themselves as stewards of the body of rhetoric, confirming and protecting it in its beauty, integrity, and vitality.

What does it mean, then, to locate rhetorical power in a body that lies outside of this narrow normative standard? A fragmented body? A dead one? A pair of speeches by Polemo of Laodicea, a famous second century sophist, provide a useful case study. They belong to the genre of declamation: the composition and performance of speeches in historical and fictional personas. These speeches stage a debate on the merits of two martyrs (Callimachus and Cynegirus) from the Battle of Marathon in 490 BCE, recounting their deaths in gratuitous detail. In the process, Polemo's speakers repeatedly speak as though the severed limbs and dead bodies of their subjects are capable of acting, persuading, and being persuaded.

This paper begins by showing how Greek and Roman rhetorical discourse deploys bodily metaphors to communicate and reinforce rhetorical norms. Second, I argue that Polemo subverts those conventions by presenting two bodies who retain power and rhetorical agency in the face of death and dismemberment. Finally, I suggest that Polemo is using these unconventional bodies to explore the power of the past in his cultural milieu. By probing the limits of Callimachus's and Cynegirus's posthumous agency, Polemo also interrogates the efficacy of a historical past which may still act upon the present.

Kajil Kara-Bhana (Stellenbosch University, South Africa): *Apuleius' Apologia: factual testimony or fictionalized self-fashioning?*

Apuleius' Apologia, a unique and intricately woven literary masterpiece from the second century CE is a humorous, complex and ultimately ambiguous example of Roman oratory that has survived for over 2000 years. The speech, which purports to be a defence against accusations of sorcery and murder, occupies a unique position at the intersection of forensic reality and literary performance. The speech is filled with procedural detail, the names of individuals and documentary evidence which anchor it in historical fact. However, its scientific and philosophical digressions and the construction of a literary persona reveal a deliberate aesthetic common with cultivated men of the second century CE. The aim of this paper is to analyse how the Apologia meaningfully incorporates both factual testimony and fictionalized self-fashioning leading to the creation of a complex and hybrid text. The hope is to situate this phenomenon within the Second Sophistic movement, where persuasion and display often obscured the truth thus, challenging modern binaries of fact and fiction. Through an analysis of elements which anchor the speech in its historical reality and those which illuminate Apuleius' literary performance, this study argues that the Apologia exemplifies a hybrid genre common in ancient literature, challenging the modern binaries of fact and fiction.

Angharad Derbyshire (Cambridge): *Empire Inside Out in Philostratus' Life of Apollonius of Tyana*

Philostratus' biography of Apollonius of Tyana, *The Life of Apollonius* (VA), covers the travels of the Pythagorean sage, from his birth in Tyana to India, Gadeira (Cadiz) and Ethiopia, before culminating in his trial in Rome. In Ján Elsner's key article on the topic (Elsner, 1997), he comments that Rome is the 'inescapable centre', a comment which has largely gone unchallenged in subsequent scholarship on the text.

This paper will argue that the opposite is the case, drawing on scholarship about the VA's spatiality (Hanus, Abraham), as well as more recent scholarship which explores the imperial manifestations of Greco-Roman Indography (Romm, Evans, Giusti). I will look afresh at the period of Apollonius' first visit to Rome (4.34, 36-47), to conclude that centre and periphery invert. Rome is not treated as the magnetic centre of empire, but is drawn against Greek cities Apollonius visits to appear markedly ordinary.

The second half of my paper deals with India, to argue that this location undergoes a process of 'defantasticalisation', as the *thauma* and mystery which are a crucial part of Greco-Roman Indography (cf. Parker) are replaced by an India which one can know securely and concretely. Not just does it have complicated political networks which reify its status as 'real' place, but also its zoological and ethnographical mystery is punctured.

At stake in this paper is a new understanding of 'world-space' in third century AD literature which does not rely on the blueprint of empire. However, in the *VA*, a text which seeks to reinscribe the Greek religious identity through the life course of its biographical subject, the conclusion to the inversion is the unsticking of Imperial Greek identity from any Roman anchor, and a swivelling of the gaze outside Roman boundaries.

Marijn Visscher (University of Bergen): *Lucian's statues in the temenos of the temple in Hierapolis-Bambyce: A literary construction of the past and present and the relation of Greece and the Near East*

In Lucian of Samosata's description of the temple of the Syrian Goddess in Hierapolis-Bambyce, he paints a picture of the temple and its surroundings in great detail. However, the reader is left to wonder what this picture signifies. Lucian is known for his satirical writing style which often seems to mock superstition, religion and philosophy Lightfoot (2003). At the same time, Lucian's *On the Syrian Goddess*, which was written - most likely - in the second century CE presents a wealth of information about the religious landscape of the Roman Near East. Even though Hierapolis-Bambyce was already a major pre-Hellenistic Aramean religious center, very little remains of it today.

In his description of the *temenos* and the altar, Lucian lists various statues that are standing in the courtyard before the temple. This list includes queens, kings and mythological figures from both the Greek world and the Near East. This eclectic collection of statues constitutes a deliberate choice, either by the overseers at the temple or, as seems more likely, Lucian himself as part of a literary construction.

This paper will investigate what the figures of Helen, Hecuba, Andromache, Paris, Hector, Achilles, Nireus, Philomela, Procne, Tereus, Semiramis, Combabis, Stratonice, Alexander, and Sardanapalus, have in common and why those figures are chosen to represent the diversity of the Greek, Trojan, and Near Eastern figures (Lucian, *On the Syrian Goddess*, 39-40). Through close literary analysis of these

figures and their mythology, this paper investigates how Lucian's literary temple functions as a space of religious interchange and cultural negotiation in the Roman Near East.

PANEL 75: Inscriptions and Audiences 4: Inscriptions and Literature. Chair: *tbc venue: #tbc

Jordi Alonso (Louisiana): *Incisum jubet evanescere carmen: Inscriptions and Authority in Ubertino Carrara's Columbus*

In Book I of Ubertino Carrara's *Columbus: Carmen Epicum* (1715), the goddess Aretia finds an arch inscribed with the warning: *Janua pandetur nulli, quae ducit ad Indos*. "The Door to India opens for no man." With a gesture she compels the verse to vanish—*incisum jubet evanescere carmen*—and replaces it with a prophecy of Columbus's destined passage to the Indies. This scene encapsulates a recurrent device in Carrara's epic: the staging of transitions through monumental inscriptions. Throughout the *Columbus*, engraved texts regulate access to space, knowledge, and destiny. At Tenerife, the Janus gate frames Columbus's right to discovery; in Book VI, half-ruined walls evoke the lost laws and institutions of Atlantis; in Book X, an arch declares *Hac iter ad Verum*, "here is the road to Truth" promising more wisdom here than a lifetime beneath Plato's plane tree. These imagined inscriptions create textual thresholds that Columbus and the reader must confront, interpret, or transcend. This paper argues that Carrara deploys the poetics of inscription to align his epic with both ancient monumental tradition and Jesuit pedagogy. Inscriptions function not merely as narrative ornaments but as sites of hermeneutic encounter: they command belief, test authority, and anchor Columbus's journey within a global reimagining of Roman epigraphic culture. By embedding epigraphic motifs into epic narrative, Carrara situates conquest as both spatial and textual—an expansion of empire through the reading, rewriting, and erasure of inscribed words. Engaging with the conference theme of "Inscriptions and their Audiences", this paper explores how Carrara's epic invites readers to become epigraphic interpreters, navigating between classical precedent and Jesuit ideology. "*Incisum jubet evanescere carmen"* emerges as more than a dramatic line: it encapsulates Carrara's vision of inscription as mutable yet authoritative, where the fate of nations can hinge on the vanishing or rewriting of a verse.

Richard Westall (University of Dallas, Rome program): *Romancing the Stone: The Genesis of the Life of Porphyry of Gaza*

The *Life* of bishop Porphyry of Gaza (*episc*. 395-420) arguably owes far more to epigraphy than has been perceived thus far. Archaeological survey in 1873-74 brought to light a funeral inscription for a certain Ousia that bears a striking resemblance to the report of Porphyry's death (*Vita* 103; Clermont-Ganneau 1896: 2.410 no. 13). This was duly reported by Henri Grégoire and Marc-Antoine Kugener in their critical edition of the *Life* (Grégoire/Kugener 1930: 233 n.10). Since then further parallels have been documented (Glucker 1987: 120-35 nos. 4-20). But the revolutionary moment came when Aude Busine opined that the *Life* had been inspired by such a document (Busine 2013: 338-342). Abandoning attempts to identify an authentic "kernel" of the *Life* in a hypothetical "journal" composed by Mark the Deacon a century or more before redaction of the *Life* as it stands in the Greek manuscript tradition, she pointed out the *Life of Abercius* had been inspired by an epitaph and argued that the same thing had occurred with the *Life of Porphyry of*

Gaza. However, she imagined only an inscribed death-notice (i.e. date of death and length of episcopate) as the basis for the *Life*. As has recently been remarked, this fails to explain the account of his journey to Constantinople (Whitby 2025). But there is abundant evidence for epigraphic records of embassies in the Graeco-Roman world (e.g. *SIG*^{3} 656.19-27; Canali de Rossi 1997). Moreover, the false prophecy of a long life for the empress Eudoxia (*Vita* 42) may be due to confusion between Eudoxia and Eudocia, viz. the mother and wife of Theodosius II (cf. Drake 1979: 387 n.25). Indeed, Eudocia's presence in the Holy Land and her writing poems (e.g. Sowers 2020) suggest that she may have composed an occasional piece for the *basilica Eudoxiana* of Gaza.

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Sebastián Uribe Rodríguez (Universidad Complutense de Madrid): *The Epigraphic Heritage of Acoustic Imagery in Giovanni Pontano's De Tumulis*

This paper explores the semantic field of sound in Giovanni Pontano's *De Tumulis*, a fifteenth-century collection of epitaphs that reinterprets and revives classical funerary traditions. While epitaphic poetry has long been studied for its visual and rhetorical dimensions, the recurrent references to voice, echo, song, and silence in Pontano's corpus reveal a striking concern with the acoustic presence of the dead. The epitaphs evoke the voice of the deceased, the lament of the survivors, and even the imagined dialogue between tomb and passer-by, thus transforming the epitaph into an audible medium of memory.

This study contributes to ongoing discussions about the classical heritage of epigraphy, the performative dimension of inscriptions, and the ways in which commemorative practices seek to preserve the presence of the dead through more than the written word, as it examines selected poems from *De Tumulis* alongside epigraphic comparanda from the *Carmina Latina Epigraphica* and literary echoes from Virgil, Martial, and Horace. In doing so, it highlights how the acoustic imagination functions as a strategy of commemoration: the dead are remembered not only through stone.

PANEL 76: Commemoration 6: Elite Burials. Chair: Alberto Esu (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Ethan Coulson-Haggins (Liverpool): *The 'Nereid Monument' in Context: A Reassessment of Hoplite Iconography in Fourth-Century Lycia*

The The so-called 'Nereid Monument' (c.380 BC), a monumental tomb from Lycia (now in the British Museum), has long fascinated archaeologists, historians, and the public alike. Richly adorned with decorative friezes, the tomb offers important insight into elite self-representation in early fourth-century Lycia. While much has been said of the monument, interpretations of its martial scenes – particularly the depictions of hoplite infantrymen – have often been dominated by two persistent assumptions: that they are either (a) entirely derivative of Greek art, or (b) merely evidence for Greek 'mercenary' activity.

Both approaches, however, privilege a Hellenocentric framework that marginalises local agency and denies the historicity of a distinct 'Lycian hoplite'. Indeed, such views derive from long-standing assumptions regarding Greek cultural dominance and the supposed uniqueness of the hoplite as a distinctly 'Greek' warrior, a model further politicised in modern scholarship through narratives contrasting Western martial virtue with an allegedly inferior 'East'. While these narratives have been increasingly challenged – notably through revisionist studies of Achaemenid

warfare – the Nereid Monument has yet to be fully re-examined within this critical framework.

This paper situates the monument's martial scenes within Lycia's regional and cultural contexts. Drawing on recent revisionism of both Anatolian art and hoplite warfare, it offers a close reanalysis of the monument's iconography to argue that the depicted hoplites are not merely Greek impositions but expressions of a local martial identity. The Nereid Monument thus emerges as an important source for reconstructing local Lycian conceptions of warfare and for recognising a much broader, shared martial culture that extended beyond regional borders, challenging long-standing assumptions regarding the exclusive 'Greekness' of hoplite warfare.

Alexis Daveloose (University ofGhent): *Being Elite in Troubling Times: The Alliance Network of Chiusi and Social Status*

The major Etruscan communities underwent a significant transition during the Classical and Hellenistic periods (ca. 400-1 BCE). As Rome gradually conquered Etruria, multiple social conflicts are reported throughout the region and we see more traces of social promotion than ever before, for instance in the epitaphs of freedmen. In these turbulent times, elite status was not self-evident. For Chiusi in particular, Enrico Benelli (2009a; 2009b; 2012) showed how a new elite group was formed during the fourth century BCE, but it is unclear how this aristocracy developed in the subsequent centuries. Moreover, this new elite has been reconstructed based on funerary expenditure and qualitative impressions of family ties. The former indicator is notoriously unreliable for later Chiusi, as there is much variation in the objects used within supposedly elite families. This paper investigates the second indicator, marital ties, in a quantitative manner for the first time, providing a more systematic image of the alliance network of Hellenistic Chiusi. This community has produced an extraordinary number of epitaphs for this period (almost 3,000), which often mention marriages between families. This corpus cannot be fully grasped by looking at separate families. Instead, this paper is the first to perform a Social Network Analysis for the entire community, mapping the relations between all attested families of Chiusi. The result is a revision of the established elite group of Hellenistic Chiusi, with suggestions for traditionally separate families to belong to one singular collective instead.

Matthew A. Sears (University of New Brunswick): *Posthumous Elites? "Warrior" Burials on Paros and Euboea*

This paper explores the reinterpretation and repurposing of "warrior" burials in Early-Iron-Age and Archaic Greece. Several stories in the ancient sources, such as Herodotus' account of two local heroes appearing as gigantic hoplites to ward off the Persians from Delphi (8.36-39), reveal the Greek belief that heroes could provide tangible military support, though scholarship tends to emphasize the cultural and political benefits such figures brought to their communities. Furthermore, despite the volume of work done on burial and hero cult, the spatial orientation of these sites has received little attention. In the Late Geometric and subsequent periods, several burials seem to have been conceived as sources of physical protection and were spatially positioned in such a way as to be most effective at this task. Archaeological evidence suggests that these dead were treated as true military elites and were placed to be bulwarks of their respective communities.

The 8th -century polyandrion, or mass grave, on Paros almost certainly contains the remains of Parian soldiers who died in some military action – perhaps in

the storied Lelantine War since these burials are, remarkably, spatially oriented towards the Lelantine Plain itself. At Eretria on Euboea, a series of elite burials, several with weapons and with remains in expensive bronze urns, inspired a hero cult in the early Archaic period precisely because they were pointed at Eretria's rival, Chalcis, even though the original burials likely predated the Lelantine War between these cities. While those buried on Paros might have been military elites, those who received cultic veneration at Eretria were likely not but were later reinterpreted as such. These sites represent important stages in the development of hero cult and the conception of heroes as elite warriors providing military support after death.

PANEL 77: Classical Reception. Chair: Sharon Marshall (Exeter); venue: #tbc

Louisa Buck (Brighton): *Greek mythology in the British political cartoon*

This paper looks at the utilization of classical adaptation in British political cartoons with a case study of the Myth of Sisyphus. Chosen because the image can be understood without any previous knowledge, thus making it more accessible to a contemporary audience. However, often sited within the British broadsheet papers, the commissioning editors and cartoonists do assume a certain cultural background and education and expect greater levels of understanding, connotations and interpretations derived from the image/text. My research explores how images can be adapted to represent alternative meanings, whilst remaining true to the core ideas. As a denotation the image suggests 'burden'. Circumstances and the perceived materiality of the subject: The size and weight of the boulder, the gradient of the slope, the age of Sisyphus and the weather, all contribute to the extent of the burden. What the boulders becomes, what it represents and even the sex of Sisyphus, (the suffragettes adapted the myth to illustrate their struggle), all change the nature of the burden and indicate the problem being addressed. The text: surrounding news stories, (the 2009 financial crisis in Greece for example), and eventual outcomes all contribute to the nature of Sisyphus's burden and the extent of its futility. Greater knowledge of the myth also reveals it is a punishment and that it is infinite. Readers familiar with Camus' 'Myth of Sisyphus' may be aware of the concepts Camus explored regarding hope and respite and man's absurd cycle within the context of the narrative. Embracing the futility of life, living in the moment and the chance of reflection created by the ascent and descent of the boulder.

Alice Bowen Tan (Oxford): *Asian "Medea" in America: Toward An Anti-Arborescent Theory of Reception*

In chapter five of *Re-imagining Greek Tragedy on the American Stage*, Helene Foley provides a survey of theatrical (re)productions of Euripides' *Medea* from the 19th century onwards. Her thesis, heeding to broad historical and performance trends, argues that American adaptations tend to posit Medea as a complex Other, who could be Black, Native American, foreigners, illegal immigrants, lesbians, a drag queen, etc. Moving in chronological order, Foley's project creates a dramatic genealogy of the country's marginalized Medeas.

My paper focuses on two Asian American adaptations – Velina Hasu Houston's 1994 *Kokoro (True Heart)* and Sung Jung Rno's 2004 *wAve* – that Foley discusses. While I analyze how the two playwrights reinvent Euripides' Medea into their own very different Japanese and Korean heroines, I search for a way to reconceptualize the relationship between modern and ancient texts. My argument

raises two challenges to Foley's work. One, I resist her observation that the protagonists of *Kokoro* and *wAve* – Yasako and M – are meek, naive, and helpless, "devoted mothers and skilled housewives." Pointing out that her reading is coded with an Orientalist undertone, I aim to show Yasako and M as resilient and subversive. Second, I reconsider Foley's arborescent system and resituate *Kokoro* and *wAve* in a rhizomatic, dialogic model of reception, more suited to highlight the heterogeneity inherent in Asian American literature.

Drawing from Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*, I argue that the connection between a source text and its adaptations need not follow the linear descent from ancient Greece to Rome, Europe, and the rest of the globe, the one-way family tree that affirms a Western self-image of paternity and dominance. Alternatively, there exist decentralized, interconnected, dynamic theoretical networks for non-Western texts. They offer new possibilities for reception and better account for the unpredictability of classical heritage and its global dispersion.

Vilma Losyte (Mykolas Romeris University, Lithuania): *From Exclusive to Inclusive? Marketing Classical Sculpture Between Whiteness and Polychromy*

Since the nineteenth century, classical sculpture has often been mobilised as a visual support of exclusivity, reinforcing racial hierarchies, colonial ideologies, and authoritarian aesthetics. The whiteness of marble—mistaken for its original state—became an aesthetic ideal closely tied to notions of purity, Western civilisation, and European superiority, as emerita Princeton historian Nell Irvin Painter details in *The History of White People*. This visual and ideological legacy persists in contemporary marketing, where ancient statuary continues to project prestige and cultural authority. *The Louvre x Lancôme* (2023) campaign merges luxury branding with the aura of the museum's classical collections, while fashion houses such as Dolce & Gabbana claim the roots of classical heritage, as in their 2025 *alta moda* show staged in the Roman Forum, evoking antiquity's grandeur and incorporating classical imagery into jewellery design.

In the twenty-first century, however, classical heritage is also repurposed to promote inclusivity. At the 2022 Lacoste Ladies Open de France golf tournament, French artist Laurent Perbos installed a replica of the *Venus de Milo* holding a golf club, using classical imagery to highlight women's athleticism and challenge the male dominance of sporting icons. His *La Beauté et le Geste* (Paris, 2024) transformed the Venus de Milo into six multicoloured resin figures with restored arms and sports equipment, foregrounding gender equality, disability inclusion, and athletic diversity. Similarly, the 2018 U.S. commercial *Venus on the Go* depicted the statue navigating daily life with a disability, blending humour, accessibility awareness, and product promotion.

This paper analyses these dual conflicts—exclusivity/inclusivity and white/polychrome—through case studies ranging from marketing campaigns to public art installations. By examining how classical sculpture circulates in global marketing and cultural events, it asks whether contemporary adaptations genuinely dismantle the ideological frameworks inherited from the nineteenth century, or whether they repackage them in the rhetoric of diversity while leaving their foundational hierarchies intact.

PANEL 78: Re-Collections. Chair: *tbc venue: #tbc

Lorenzo Iuliano (Durham): *Aetheris et terrae genitabile quaerere tempus: Lucilius' parody of Ennian philosophical epic*

Lucilius' *concilium deorum* contained in Book 1 of his *Satires* is generally recognised as a satirical response to the council of gods narrated by Ennius in the *Annales*' Book 1. In this paper, I suggest that Lucilius conceives the first hexametric book of his *Satires* as a more complete parody of *Annales* 1, since it not only parodies the *concilium deorum*, but also the philosophical discourse on the soul, contained in the *Annales*' proem. In particular, I focus on the proemial hexameter of the *Satires*' Book 1: *Aetheris et terrae genitabile quaerere tempus* (fr. 1W). Since in other fragments Lucilius introduces earth as the element of the body and πνεῦμα as the element of the soul, I suggest that in fr. 1W Lucilius is referring to the physical constitution of the human being; indeed, I argue that *aetheris* and *terrae* are better understood as subjective genitives, rather than as objective genitives, as they are generally interpreted. In the proem of the *Annales*, *corpus* and *anima* are also said to come respectively from earth and sky (*Ann*. 6-7 (6-10) FRL). So, this topic could be regarded by the satirist as emblematic of Ennius' philosophical poetry. Moreover, since the grecism *aether* had already been introduced in Latin by Ennius, Lucilius' choice to place it as the first word of the book could be explained as a satirical allusion to Ennius' use. Therefore, while *Satires* 1 is usually seen to parody the *Annales*' *concilium deorum* alone, I argue for a dual parody of the philosophical proem as well (and Ennius' philosophical pretensions more broadly): indeed, it not only uses the *Annales*' characteristic metre, the hexameter, but it also appropriates its didactic (the discourse on the soul and the body) and heroic (the *concilium deorum*) components.

Mathieu Cuijpers (KU Leuven): *Plutarch's Notebooks in Action. New Clusters in De tranquillitate animi*

In the proem of *De tranquillitate animi*, Plutarch openly acknowledges that he composed the treatise using his personal notes (ὑπομνήματα). This rare admission has prompted modern scholars to investigate the presence of these notes across his corpus, often by identifying suspicious parallels between treatises. Since Plutarch's notebooks are not extant, their traces must be inferred from recurring clusters of ideas, quotations, and anecdotes that appear in at least two works. Such a "cluster" is defined as a combination of at least three elements, such as citations, sayings, personal reflections, or examples, occurring within a continuous and thematically coherent textual block, and repeated across multiple treatises.

Previous scholarship has identified several such clusters, particularly in *De tranquillitate animi*, the very work that inspired this line of inquiry. To date, at least four have been documented. In this paper, I propose several newly identified clusters that shed light on Plutarch's compositional method. By identifying which sections of *De tranquillitate animi* likely originate from earlier notes, I propose to examine how he repurposes these materials across different treatises to serve distinct philosophical aims and how he constructs his text. Moreover, by examining specific elements within the context of their original clusters, as they likely appeared in Plutarch's notebooks, new insight is gained into their function and meaning.

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Diletta Pompei (University of Rome Tor Vergata): *Epic and Lyric in Stobaeus' Anthologion III and IV: New Perspectives and Case Study*

The present paper examines the mechanisms of textual manipulation in Books III and IV of Stobaeus' *Anthologion*, focusing particularly on excerpts from Homer, Hesiod and the lyric poets.

Firstly, special attention will be given to cases where variations from the quoted texts cannot be dismissed as scribal errors or interpolations. Instead, these variations will be examined to establish whether they reveal deliberate alterations intended to create an independent text. These modifications range from minor lexical substitutions to epitomisations, which frequently disrupt the metrical structure. This suggests a systematic intention to present the excerpts as exempla, emphasising the universal value of their content regardless of their formal appearance.

It will be demonstrated through variation analysis that the excerptor did not have access to the complete quoted works, but rather relied on collections of *gnomai* where only the author's name or the work title —or rarely both—were preserved. On the basis of this information, the anthologist compiled the lemmata, whose irregular structure reflects his deliberate concern for intellectual honesty.

By considering both the arrangement of the excerpts and their placement within the broader context of the chapters, it becomes clear that the purpose of the Anthologion is not solely to function as a repository of Greek literature. Rather, it is intended to demonstrate the universal value of its ethical approach, which, akin to the Christian perspective, begins with the creation of the world and culminates in reflections on death.

This paper approaches the *Anthologion* as a site of creative reconfiguration and demonstrates how it participates in processes of cultural transmission that redefine the function and reception of the texts in Late Antiquity. This approach contributes to wider debates on the reception and survival of classical texts, aligning with the conference's focus on the ways in which ancient literature and knowledge were reshaped, reused and reinterpreted over time.

PANEL 79: Many Lives of Latin Epigram. Chair: Julene Abad Del Vecchio (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Organisers: Ian Goh (Swansea) and Sandro La Barbera (University of Trento)

'What is an Epigram? A dwarfish whole, | its body brevity, and wit its soul.' So wrote Samuel Taylor Coleridge in 1809. For a small-scale form, epigram contains unexpected multitudes. Its sense of finality stems from its likely origins in funerary contexts and its typical (but not, eventually, essential) use of the end-stopped elegiac couplet; the survival of such occasional, ephemeral verse is bolstered by the memorably elegant wit that lends it an unexpected longevity, especially in the hands of its greatest practitioners such as Martial. Part-time poets proliferated, too, whether cloaked in anonymity like the scurrilous composers in Suetonius, *Nero* 39, or important personages such as Hadrian, whose Latin poetry (collected at Courtney 1993: 375–86) includes the infamous lines that begin with *animula uagula blandula* ('sweet little wandering soul-lette'). So, too, the heirs of Constantine inscribed their often-acrostic Latin verse on monuments in stone (Trout 2016: 80–8), as did Pope Damasus (d. 384) in commemorating Christian martyrs (Lapidge 2017: 637–48): a physical claim to permanence in the reification of the spoken word. And how can we forget the self-important, such as Cicero to Tiro as reported at Pliny *Epist.* 7.4.3, not

to mention other authors, such as Ovid in the *Amores*, wielding epigrams as justifications for life and work in paratextual fashion (see e.g. Martelli 2013: 35–8).

We intend to pay close attention to the dynamics of the tradition of Latin epigram as distinct from its Greek counterparts. In this we are inspired by Denis Feeney, who observed (following Otto Weinreich): 'The exchange of question and answer between poet and reader or imagined interlocutor is, then, a distinctive feature of Latin epigram, with the "paradox epigram" the most pointedly concise principle of the more general format' (2009: 33). We must also ponder the role, and more importantly, the value of the author in these exchanges, as attached to such trifles, even a whole cornucopia of them. Thus, Nicolò Campodonico develops important arguments by those such as Frings 1998 and Kruschwitz 2019, to see how Rome's premier epicist could be claimed as an epigrammatic author by his successors. Ian Goh uncovers an unlikely source for Martial's gifts in his Saturnalian catalogue collections: his compatriot Columella's advice to the (similarly profit-hungry) bailiff in the *De Re Rustica*. Talitha Kearey probes the unproductive queerness of the seemingly otiose Vandal poet Luxorius, living up to his name. And Sandro La Barbera examines, in the wake of such analyses as Vredeveld 2013, the content and context of early modern inscriptions on paintings, going beyond the bare *fecit* to uncover dialogues and poetic responsions in the realm of visual culture.

Nicolò Campodonico (Trinity College, Dublin): *Miniature Virgil: His (supposed) epigrams and their rewritings*

Despite his fame as an epic poet, according to his ancient biographies Virgil's first and last works were epigrams, namely the epitaphs of his teacher Ballista and himself, and others are attributed to him in the late antique *Anthologia Latina*. This paper examines some of these epigrams to argue that, though probably not written by Virgil, they cast him as an epigrammatist, soon becoming models for later writers. At the same time, they underwent variations and rewritings that reveal attempts to creatively engage with Virgil and his poetic voice.

The epigram on Ballista, for instance, served as a model for inscriptions where reproach is turned into praise (Cugusi 2023: 2838–9). It was also reworked by Foca in his poetic *Vita* of Virgil, where interpolators seem to collaborate in offering the most effective one-line variation of the distich. A similar dynamic is found in Virgil's epitaph, imitated in Silius' *Punica*, and rewritten within the *carmina duodecim sapientum* (*Anth. Lat. 507–18; 555–66 Riese)*. This section provides twenty-four variations on the epitaph, which becomes both a model and a tool to explore Virgil's life and works from multiple angles.

The final case concerns two distichs attributed to Virgil (*Anth. Lat*. 250–1 SB): one celebrating Augustus' felicity, the other reproaching a plagiarist of the former. Here, Virgil's epigrammatic talent is praised, especially in the humanist rewriting of the *Vita*. More significantly, the motif of literary theft epitomises the authorial fluidity within Virgil's reception: appropriately, the closing line of the second distich underwent multiple variations, echoing the *Georgics*.

In conclusion, Virgil's posthumous reputation as an epigrammatist, gained alongside his canonical authority, meant that his couplets offered later readers and writers models for imitation and variation, enabling engagement with his literary figure through a genre defined by brevity and playfulness.

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Ian Goh (Swansea): *'Martial's Saturnalian lists in relation to productive and instructive texts and materials*

In the footsteps of important work on the *Xenia* and *Apophoreta*, Martial's earliest epigram collections (e.g. Stroup 2006, Rimell 2009 ch. 4, Grewing 2010, Blake 2011, Grewing 2020), this paper delves into a central paradox underlying these texts: the fact that their mooted gift exchange supposedly takes place during the Saturnalia leads one to anticipate disorder rather than meticulous organisation. It has been noticed that the reductivity of the lemma-like titles for the *disticha* in these collections is comparable to the quasi-paratextual material that forms Book 1 of Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, and the catalogue of wines in the *Xenia* (13.109–25) is arranged according to that offered by the same author in *Natural History* Book 14. As well as further exploring the relationship of Martial's small-scale ephemera with that encyclopaedia, I propose another text with which Martial is in conversation: the earlier (Neronian) *De Re Rustica* of his fellow Spaniard Columella. This agricultural manual features at least two lists, a *parapegma*-style calendar in Book 11 for the duties of the farm manager (*uilicus*), and a paratextual index following that book. Similar to the *Apophoreta*, which presents its gifts in pairs, Columella gives the same instructions first in verse, in Book 10, then in prose in Book 11. The worldview of both texts, with an eye on commodification and the bottom line, is similar. And even Martial's unexpected abjuring of sexuality (in *this* economy, in *this* festival!?) finds a counterpart in Columella's advice to abstain from such matters for the *uilicus* and his female counterpart, the *uilica*. Therefore, we can extend the milquetoast conclusions of one of the few previous comparisons of the two authors, namely Steiner 1954. I close by extending the analysis to Martial's later explicitly Saturnalian books, 7 and 11.

Talitha Kearey (St Andrews): *Luxorius and the poetics of unproductivity*

The poet Luxorius wrote a Latin *liber epigrammaton* in Carthage during the reign of the Vandals: 91 short epigrams and a cento, preserved in the *Anthologia Latina*. I begin with a cluster of poems on 'deviant' sexualities characterised by a refusal of (re)production. This theme of reproductive failure is visible in the erotic poems, where non-normative sexuality figures anti-futurity, but also emerges in other poems: e.g. the abandonment of *uis* that characterises animal domestication. Luxorius' own poetic techniques are complicit too. His programmatic statements are backwards glances to the time of composition, and he replaces the *topos* of oral immortality with his own decomposition via dust and bookworms; his metapoetic imagery celebrates *ars* over *natura* and re-use over new production. The wedding-cento also relies on re-use and fragmentation for its own poetic production, even as it exposes the sexual violence underlying the production of *centum nepotes*. Luxorius' poetry, then, problematises the reproductive logic of the future; it aestheticises deviant eroticism as a figure for non-teleological (non-)reproduction; and it insists on the interrelation of death and life, stasis and growth. It is ripe, I suggest, for reading via queer theorisations of futurity, failure, and the death drive (cf. esp. Mario Telò's and Paul Allen Miller's recent work). I highlight two poetic techniques exemplifying this in terms of form. First, Luxorius' repetition, audible on a verbal level and perceptible as structural force across the *libellus*. Second, his epigrammatic reliance on the form of the riddle. Unlike Martial's poems, which make their punchlines clear, Luxorius luxuriates in irresolvable ambiguity. Crucially, he poses queer sexuality as unknowable. I focus on poem 78 (= 364 Riese), in which a woman's rejection of

marriage hints at either asexuality or lesbianism, but remains opaque, in contrast to Martial's poems of 'unknowable' lesbianism which reveal their secrets.

Sandro La Barbera (University of Trento): *Painting philology: Original Latin epigrams in early modern art*

This paper reads Renaissance paintings as epigram collections, insofar as short metrical texts in Latin enrich the meaning, ethos, and aesthetics of many canvases in early modern Europe. The epigram as a form has always been bound to the visual, and scholarship often stresses how painting motivates the writing of epigrams—typically in the mode of 'the epigram explains the painter's idea.' Less attention has been given to the reverse: paintings as (passive) textual witnesses to these literary works, which, though often of uncertain authorship, still belong to the continuum of Latin literary history. As a case study, I examine the Latin epigrams on the paintings of Lucas Cranach the Elder, to show both the features of this particular 'visualiterary' chapter and, more broadly, the potential of this approach to uncover intellectual networks, creative exchanges among artists, and new perspectives on the creation, transmission, and reception of Latin literature.

PANEL 80: Greek Literature and the Near East. Chair: Manos Tsakiris (Manchester); venue: #tbc

Roberto Morales-Harley (University of Costa Rica): *Polyphemus reconsidered: The Akkadian Humbaba and the Sanskrit Baka as counterparts for the Greek "ogre"*

The story of Polyphemus has traditionally been studied as a representative of the folktale genre. More recently, it has also been contrasted with specific cultural contexts. On one hand, aiming at a reciprocal understanding, it has been linked to the story of Humbaba in Tablet 5 of the Akkadian *Epic of Gilgamesh* (Louden, 2011); on the other hand, taking into consideration the shared cultural inheritance, it has been associated with the story of Baka from Book 1 of the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* (E. B. West, 2005/2006). This paper supports the view that it is related to both.

Methodologically, we draw from Louden's thirteen parallelisms between the narratives of Polyphemus and Humbaba, as well as from E. B. West's seventeen parallelisms between the narratives of Polyphemus and Baka, and we propose ten parallelisms that, being shared between all three literary versions, could very well be taken as the core narrative elements for this encounter between hero and "ogre" that would have featured in three major epic poems from the Ancient World. Moreover, following what has been theorized about Near Eastern/Greek contacts via Cyprus (M.L. West, 1997; Powell, 2002; Teodorsson, 2006) and about Greek/Indian contacts through Barigaza (Wulff Alonso, 2014), we suggest the possibility of an East-to-West *and then* West-to-East transmission of said narrative.

Both the subject matter and its treatment are somewhat relevant to the conference's theme of "The Near East and the Classical World", and they are also likely to inspire interdisciplinary and comparative approaches within the fields of Classics, Assyriology, and Indology.

Francesco Sironi (Università degli Studi di Milano / Liceo Antonio Banfi (Vimercate, Italy)): *Where are they now? The Mesopotamian Ballad of Early Rulers and Alcaeus, fr. 38a V*

The last few decades of scholarly research have shown how comparative readings of literary works from different ancient civilizations can prove fruitful for a better

understanding of the works themselves: the detection of analogies between Homeric epics and the *Epic of Gilgamesh* or between Hesiod's myth of heavenly successions and the Kumarbi cycle are only some of the major outcomes of this approach. While this research perspective has been adopted for mythological narratives in particular, its application to lyrical texts seems to be a field more open to new explorations.

Melody Dilger (Ruprecht-Karls-University Heidelberg): *The King is Dead; Long Live the King! – The Mesopotamian Practice of the Substitute King in Herodotus' Histories*

This paper examines the practice of the substitute king presented in Herodotus' *Histories*, emphasising the ancient Near Eastern tradition depicted and its manifestation within a Persian context.

The concept of the substitute king, *šar pûḫi* Akkadian, dates back to the 2nd millennium BCE and persists into the era of Alexander the Great, as reported by Arrian (*Anabasis* 7.24.1-3). In ancient Mesopotamia, a substitute king was appointed to protect the reigning monarch from foreseen harm, fulfilling both religious and political functions.

This study will analyse two case studies from Herodotus. First, the paper will examine the substitute king Artabanus in Book 7 of the *Histories*, where the Persian king Xerxes has received unfavourable omens in his dreams (Hdt. 7.15-18). Second, I will consider a potential reference to a substitute king concerning Cambyses' brother, Smerdis, a notion that has not been previously suggested in the scholarship, in Book 3 (Hdt. 3.61-65).

By analysing Herodotus' account alongside evidence from ancient Near Eastern sources, including the correspondence of King Esarhaddon, this study aims to enhance our understanding of the significance of this ritual within a Greek context. It also examines Herodotus' insights in relation to Sumerian, Babylonian, and Assyrian traditions.

The objective of this paper is to critically assess Herodotus' depiction of the substitute king through a comparative lens, supplemented by close textual analysis of both Herodotus and Akkadian sources. Building on this, the paper argues that the implementation of Assyrian and Mesopotamian evidence allows scholars to take a fresh approach towards key passages of Herodotus and reconsider ongoing debates surrounding Darius' revolt and ascension to the Persian throne.

Ultimately, the argument posited here suggests that Herodotus was not only aware of ancient Mesopotamian customs and rituals but also utilised this knowledge within his narrative to elucidate the behaviours of the Achaemenid rulers.

Antonio Papapicco (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa: *The Motif of Quarreling Plants: Near Eastern Traditions and Callimachus' Iambus 4. D*

Callimachus' *Iambus* 4 contains a fable about a laurel and an olive disputing over their superiority. Their quarrel is interrupted by a bramble, which attempts to mediate but is harshly silenced by the laurel. While a very similar fable also appears in the Aesopic tradition (213 Perry), the motif of quarreling plants is well attested in Near Eastern literature. The Oriental origin of the fable has, therefore, long been defended by several scholars.

This paper examines the theme of quarreling plants in Near Eastern traditions to highlight similarities and differences of an ancient motif that spread across the Mediterranean. West (1969, 118–20) noted the close resemblance between Callimachus' fable and a Babylonian tale recounting the quarrel of a tamarisk and a

palm (Lambert 1960, 150 ff.). A similar structure appears elsewhere: a now lost Egyptian fable staged a dispute between a sycamore and a palm (Bresciani 1990, 339). Love songs from Ramesside age similarly stage talking plants (Bresciani 1990, 443 ff.).

Jewish and Biblical texts preserve further versions. The most famous is Jotam's parable in *Judges* 9.7–15, where trees debate the choice of their king and eventually turn to a bramble. The *Words of Ahiqar* (Achaemenid period) feature a dialogue between a bramble and a pomegranate (Contini 2005). Later Jewish traditions attest plant debates: a commentary on *Esther* 5. 14 in the *Midrash Rabbah* (Ginzberg 1936, 443-44) reports a quarrel among plants, again resolved by a bramble, while a hymn in the Second Targum of *Esther* (7. 10) records a comparable exchange (Grossfeld 1994).

In conclusion, Callimachus' fable is best read within this Near Eastern background. He attributes the story to "the ancient Lydians" (v. 7), thus confirming its Eastern provenance. This reflects a typically Callimachean practice—to sing "nothing that is not attested" (fr. 612 Pf.)..

PANEL 81: Women and Girls' Experience in Greek Religion 2. Organizers and Chairs: Ellie Mackin Roberts (Leeds) and Ben Cassell (London); venue: #tbc

See above, PANEL 73

Vivienne McGlashan (London): *Seeing Satyrs: The Maenadic State of Mind*

The archetypal maenad in vase painting is unmistakeable – she wears a *nebris* or panther skin, carries a *thyrsos* or snake, dances extravagantly with her hair loose and her feet bare. Scholars have long debated whether these figures are intended to be mythological devotees of Dionysos – like the women of Bacchae – or nymphs, or human women performing the mysterious ritual known as the *orebasia*. Frequently, they are found with satyrs, which seems to suggest that they must be nymphs. However, they also often carry religious paraphernalia or dance before a statue of Dionysos, suggesting that they are intended to be taking part in a ritual rather than part of his retinue.

In black-figure work, satyrs rarely appear when maenads are engaged in ritual activities (<1%); in red-figure work, this increases to more than 20%. Drawing on three theories – Robin Osborne's argument that red figure work intends to show in inner life of the characters portrayed, Tanya Luhrmann's concept of the 'faith frame' through which the world is perceived when one is engaged in religious activity, and Stewart Guthrie's description of the cognitive process referred to 'agency detection' – I will argue that the red-figure artists are showing what is happening in the maenad's mind when she performs her ritual. The presence of satyrs – or of Dionysos himself – indicates that she is experiencing the world through the filter or lens of her mimetic performance of the mythical maenad; that through her roleplay she has entered a third space between the mortal world and the divine, in which humans and supernatural agents can interact without the dangers associated with epiphany.

Victoria Rooney (Hope University): *Trauma and Defiance: Creusa's Rejection of the Sacred in Euripides' Ion*

Trauma and Defiance: Creusa's Rejection of the Sacred in Euripides' Ion In Euripides' Ion, Creusa voices an open and enraged challenge to the god who violated her. From

the outset she is positioned as an open challenger to Apollo, contrasted against the piety of Ion, and this adversarial role is underscored both through her speech and her physical placement in the performance space. This paper examines how tragedy's animate and enacted form conveyed a haptic impression of Creusa's plight, and her suffering was relayed to the audience through embodied reception. Within the ritual context of the Dionysia, Creusa's stance takes on a heightened significance: she outright rejects Apollo's authority from within his own sacred precinct, and articulates a sharp cynicism on the gods' actions towards women in particular. From the outset, her physical presence and actions on stage — her gestures, her pointed silences, and robust accusations — and through her vivid report of her encounter with Apollo, offers not only a testimony of trauma but also the voice of a forceful critic. By reviewing how Creusa's speech and bodily performance shaped audience reception, I argue that Euripides staged a profoundly unsettling religious experience, in which female suffering and resistance were given direct dramatic form, and centred in the audience's attention.

Sam Newington (Aberdeen): *Female Experience and Sensing the Eleusinian Mysteries.*

A socio-political perspective has often steered discussions about the Eleusinian Mysteries; with consideration on the importance of the polis and political prestige (of Athens). However, this paper will shift from this recurring focus and explore the sensory experiences of the participants / initiants and how the female deities, Persephone and Demeter, fundamentally frame those sensory experiences. The paper will draw upon the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, considering the auditory and aromatics of the natural world, and how these features reflect both an induced state and reflection of the human condition. In comparative, the paper will also draw upon the Lovetelli Urn, which presents not only impression of auditory aspects but how induced blindness is also part of the ritual experience of revelation, along with the implications of such. The paper will offer a distinct genderised reflection, by analysing the sensory and psychological dimensions of women participants, and that this focus will allow us to move beyond a polis / patriarchal appreciation to defining the importance of women more broadly within ancient Greek religion.

Amy Arden (Leicester): *Lament, Justice and Vengeance: The nomos of female justice mapped out in the constellations*

Only a small handful of women were catasterised as Greek constellations. Yet their mythologies provide a touchstone for understanding the closely associated conceptions of lament, justice, and vengeance. The acceptable expression of these were highly constrained by gender.

Justice is apparent in the constellation Virgo through the myth of Dike, the embodiment of justice. Also associated with Virgo are Demeter's quest for Persephone and Erigone's tragic death. Each of these myths demonstrate lament and justice, yet there was a gendered nomos regulating these expressions. When women stepped outside of nomos or instigated the gods' envy, they were often defeminised, de-mothered, or dehumanised. Examples include the transmogrification of Callisto (Ursa Major), the punishment of Kassiepeia (Cassiopeia) and the near sacrifice of Andromeda.

In *praxis*, cults demanded ritualised expressions of justice, lament, and vengeance. The Thesmophoria and Eleusinian Mysteries required participants to embody the goddesses' suffering. Pleas for justice and vengeance on curse tablets were dedicated to Demeter and Persephone in Thelpousa. At the Temple of Artemis

Orthia, the maiden's procession to the altar was compared to the race of the Pleiades across the night sky. This paper explores the feminised versions of justice, lament and vengeance which were associated with the constellations in ritual and thereby reinforced their appropriate gendered expression in society.

Ben Cassell (London) and Ellie Mackin Roberts (Leeds): *Female Ritual Experience and the Northern edge of the Akropolis (roundtable discussion)*

While the ritual activities carried out in relation to Erechtheion and Sanctuary of Pandrossos are well understood as being executed by women and girls, it has not been discussed as an inherently female ritual space. Here, the varying and numerous ritual practices conducted on and in proximity to the northern edge of the Akropolis will be examined in relation to the experiential potentials afforded by these environments, intersecting with the questions, subjects and themes raised by the previous papers. This will include considering issues of ritual and spatial memory, attachment to place, the *Perserschutt* and the multi-generational religious experiences of the *genos Praxiergidai*. This final paper will be a joint presentation and conducted as a roundtable in which we invite the participation of the other speakers and audience.

POSTERS

Posters will be displayed at the Conference venue

Louisa Buck (Brighton): *Drawn to the Classics. How drawing can be used as a research methodology and teaching aid*

For the researcher, drawing as a research methodology can contribute to the production of added insights in terms of essence themes within classical myth, aid memory and produce accessible and enduring outputs. As an academic and artist, I have utilised my drawing practice to contribute to my understanding of classical myth and to dig down into identifying core truths. The production of single panel artworks requires choices of image that can reveal the essence of a narrative, metaphoric verities and intentional perspicuity. These ideas can translate as a teaching aid in the learning of the classics across a diverse age range. The image can certainly serve as more than an illustration to a narrative, can create greater accessibility and can transcend language barriers. The image can be used either by analysing the work of others or by class production of new images.

This poster image represents the opening setting of The Odyssey in book 1, Homer. (Θεών άγορά).

In the image we see Athena speaking to Zeus in the presence of the other gods. She has taken this opportunity to meet in the absence of Poseidon, represented by a vessel of dead fish that he has left behind. It informs us of the gods' concern for the plight of Odysseus and immediately introduces the viewer into the contents of The Odyssey, the main protagonist and the adventures and mishaps faced.

Caitlin Casselman (Bolton School): *Urban Audiences and Early Christian Verse Inscriptions*

In line with the 'Inscriptions and their Audiences' theme, this poster will present an inscribed hexameter poem of Pope Damasus I, Bishop of Rome from 366 to 384, as a site that acknowledges, repudiates, and refashions the historiography of its display context. To urban Christians living in the ecumenical period of the second to the fourth century AD, the topographies of the spaces they inhabited were sites of potential cognitive dissonance. In Rome especially, the great pagan monuments were at once secular and patriotic simulacra of the empire's power, and idolatrous dwellings of nefarious demons. A poster format will allow me to explore how early Christian verse inscriptions combined poetic and architectural forms to negotiate these dissonances. I will present images of the inscription, alongside site plans of its display context to invite delegates to think about the inscribed verse through a topophrastic lens. Therefore, this poster will also address the theme of 'Environment', with particular interest in how urban environments can become repositories for communal self-definition both positive and negative. Damasus' literary activities appropriated the semiotics of pre-Constantinian writers for a Christian agenda, using both the possibility of intertextual and in-situ readings to generate meaning. In providing a visual context for delegates, my discussions will open up the manifold conflicting affective valences that point to the environment being shared between reader and inscription. I will focus on how these relationships emerge and explore their possible effects on urban audiences, especially pilgrims. The fourth century is recognised as a seminal moment in early Church canonisation, and a new critical engagement with the

inscriptional works of Damasus stands to make an important contribution to how we understand the formation and reception of early Christian epigraphy.

Tyler Gillis (University of Central Florida): Echoes of the Oracle: A Spatial Study of Delphi

This poster will examine the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi as a case study in the tension between individual excellence and communal piety in the ancient Greek world. Drawing on digital spatial analysis conducted through ArcGIS, I reconstruct the sanctuary's physical and ritual landscape to argue that Delphi consistently elevated religious piety over personal or civic claims to prestige.

The Sanctuary of Apollo was not merely a religious site but also a political stage where *poleis*, elites, and individuals sought recognition through offerings, monuments, and dedications. Yet, despite the material competition for visibility and memory, Delphi's sacred order ensured that these displays were subordinated to the authority of Apollo's oracle and the ritual framework of the site. Using GIS mapping of communal routes, visibility analyses, and spatial reconstructions, this project highlights how architectural placement and ritual movement structured meaning at Delphi, redirecting attention away from individual excellence and toward collective deference to divine authority.

The argument contributes to ongoing discussions in ancient political philosophy by reframing Delphi not simply as a neutral religious site but as a managed space where the politics of piety defined how power, honor, and identity could be expressed. At the same time, by employing digital tools to visualize ritual experience, this project demonstrates how modern spatial technologies can recover ancient strategies of control, negotiation, and symbolic communication.

This poster thus bridges classical studies with digital humanities, situating Delphi within the broader debate about the role of sacred landscapes in shaping political and cultural values. It speaks directly to the conference's themes of *Ancient Political Philosophy* and *Environment, Resources and the Ancient World*, showing how space, ritual, and divine authority converged to enforce piety as a central organizing principle of Greek political life. My project can be viewed here: https://arcg.is/1S8Dje

Claud Harris (Royal Holloway): *Depictions of Remembrance in the 'Crane Relief' in the Tomb of the Haterii*

The so-called 'Crane Relief' in the Tomb of the Haterii near the Via Labicana, southeast of Rome, has been discussed previously in scholarship for its detailed depiction of a tread-wheel powered crane (Stambaugh 1988, p.155). However, it also features depictions of Hateria, the wife of the son of the freedman and *redemptor* Q. Haterius Antoninus (Borg 2019, p.255), her children, an elderly woman and an anonymous figure peeking out from the door of Hateria's mausoleum. The identity of this woman has been greatly debated, with some claiming she is Hateria herself (Trimble 2018, p.344), however upon closer inspection she bears great similarity to the elderly woman seen completing funerary rites in the liminal space above the mausoleum, and therefore I argue that she is the same mourner being shown exiting the tomb.

The implications of this are relevant both to the relief itself and the significance of funerary rites and remembrance in freedmen's funerary art as a whole. Although many freedmen's tombs focus on the work they did whilst alive, this relief highlights the family Haterius has built as a Roman citizen and their continued

remembrance after their deaths. Identifying such links within the relief also promotes appreciation for the quality and complexity of these works, which are usually only mentioned for their depictions of machinery or the industries ex-slaves worked in post-manumission (e.g. Tomb of Eurysaces the Baker). There are several figures who occur repeatedly within the relief, such as Hateria and her children on the decoration of the mausoleum and in the liminal space above. A further unnamed figure appearing twice, whose role appears to be to represent the mourning of Hateria and her children, is illustrative of the attention to detail involved in freedmen's funerary art. This poster is relevant to the theme of Commemorating the Dead.

Emily Howe (Royal Holloway): *Between Judaea, Athens, and Rome: Queen Julia Berenice's Trilateral Political Persona*

Throughout our ancient and contemporary sources, Queen Berenice is defined by her relationship to men. Our ancient sources leave her voiceless, condemning her for alleged incest, depravity, and betraying the Jewish people.

However, if we look beyond this masculine lens through the analysis of select and limited material, Berenice emerges as a Queen in her own right, appearing alone and exercising her own authority independently of her male relatives.

Berenice takes on a variety of 'identities' or 'personas', whether Jewish, Hellenic or Roman, adopting the customs, traditions and behaviours of those with whom she seeks to engage, to wield political influence as a representative of the Jewish people.

Through the analysis of select primary material, this poster shall present four key pieces of evidence demonstrating Berenice's tri-persona. Josephus's *Bellum Judaicum* [II.309-314] shows her performing strict Jewish ritual observance while petitioning Florus to stop Jerusalem's slaughter, then shifting to Roman diplomatic letter-writing [II.333-334] when religious appeal fails. The *Vita* [II.343-344, 410] reveals her utilising her Roman connections to save Justus of Tiberias. In the Athenian inscription *IG* II² 3449, alone honours Berenice as a Hellenic Queen as a benefactor of the city. Visual evidence suggests that Berenice even appears on two coins, *RPC* II 2261 and *RPC* II 2234, mimicking Ptolemaic coinage such as 18203065 - *MK-B*. Berenice assumes the tri-persona of a Hellenistic Queen, a Roman diplomat, and a pious Jew.

This poster shall visually separate the source material to demonstrate how Berenice strategically utilised different 'personas' and 'cultural identities' for political gain. Rather than a passive figure, she emerges as a diplomat who knew how to navigate complex relations through identity performance. This research challenges heteronormative interpretations of women in positions of power to reveal their political philosophy in the Levant and wider Classical World.

Jemima Jayne (London); Nana Smith (London); Devon Keesee (William & Mary, Virginia USA); Maya Parfitt (William & Mary, Virginia USA):

Well known in antiquity and today for its marble quarries, the Cycladic island of Naxos played a key role in the development of monumental sculpture and architecture during the Archaic period. During its 2025 season, the Naxos Quarry Project (NQP) investigated the remains of a colossal marble architectural block that remains *in situ* in the ancient quarry of Melanes. The block, abandoned in antiquity, is largely ignored in modern scholarship due to its context (Welter 1924, Gruben and Königs 1970, Korres 2021), while in previous studies of the Naxian quarries, the abandoned sculptures have received more attention (Kokkorou-Alevras 1992, Korres 2021). The

NQP team – an international group of students and scholars – used a multidisciplinary approach for archaeological documentation on Naxos to ascertain the block's extraction point in the quarry, its intended purpose, and the reason for its abandonment. In addition to traditional field methods like hand drawing, measuring, photography, and field walking, the team also used digital technologies like drone LiDAR, GIS, photogrammetry, and digital modelling to produce the first full-scale study of the monolith and to map the surrounding quarry remains. The most likely candidate for a final intended destination for the monolith is the unfinished Archaic temple on the Palatia islet (known as the "Portara"). With evidence gained through archaeological autopsy and archival material, the NQP team assessed this potential connection in conjunction with documenting the monolith.

In connection to the theme, "Environment, Resources and the Ancient World", this poster details the advantages of documenting archaeological remains with a multidisciplinary approach, and how using traditional and digital field methods can provide a more holistic understanding of ancient quarries. It also demonstrates how the thorough analysis of the abandoned monolith in the context of its possible relationship to the "Portara" necessitates a re-examination of the unfinished temple itself.